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QUEEN'S GARDENS

POEMS by MRS. BROWNING AND OTHERS

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FROM QUEENS' GARDENS

Selected Poems

OF

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING

JEAN INGELOW ADELAIDE A. PROCTER

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI

AND OTHERS

GATHERED BY ROSE PORTER

TROY, N.Y.
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1889

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ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.

"Ah you, you care for rhymes;
So here be rhymes to pore on . . .
I've been told
These are not idle, as so many are,
But set hearts beating pure as well as fast."

FROM QUEENS' GARDENS.

WORK.

WHAT are we set on earth for? Say, to toil—
Nor seek to leave thy tending of the vines,
For all the heat o' the day, till it declines,
And Death's mild curfew shall from work assoil.
God did anoint thee with His odorous oil,
To wrestle, not to reign; and He assigns
All thy tears over, like pure crystallines,
For younger fellow-workers of the soil
To wear for amulets. So others shall
Take patience, labor, to their heart and hand,
From thy hand, and thy heart, and thy brave cheer,
And God's grace fructify through thee to all.
The least flower, with a brimming cup, may stand
And share its dew-drop with another near.

COMFORT.

SPEAK low to me, my Saviour, low and sweet
From out the hallelujahs, sweet and low,
Lest I should fear and fall, and miss Thee so

Who art not missed by any that entreat.
Speak to me as to Mary at Thy feet; —
And if no precious gums my hands bestow,
Let my tears drop like amber, while I go
In search of Thy divinest Voice complete
In humanest affection — thus, in sooth,
To lose the sense of losing! As a child,
Whose song-bird seeks the wood for evermore,
Is sung to in its stead by Mother's mouth;
Till, sinking on her breast, love-reconciled,
He sleeps the faster that he wept before.

CONSOLATION.

ALL are not taken! there are left behind
Living Beloveds, tender looks to bring,
And make the daylight still a happy thing,
And tender voices, to make soft the wind.
But if it were not so, — if I could find
No love in all the world for comforting,
Nor any path but hollowly did ring,
Where "dust to dust" the love from life disjoined —
And if before those sepulchres unmoving
I stood alone (as some forsaken lamb
Goes bleating up the moors in weary dearth),
Crying, "Where are ye, O my loved and loving?" —
I know a Voice would sound, "Daughter, *I AM*.
Can I suffice for Heaven, and not for earth?"

IRREPARABLENESS.

I HAVE been in the meadows all the day,
And gathered there the nosegay that you see;
Singing within myself as bird or bee,
When such do field-work on a morn of May:
But now I look upon my flowers, — decay
Hath met them in my hands, more fatally
Because more warmly clasped; and sobs are free
To come instead of songs. What do you say,
Sweet counsellors, dear friends? — that I should go
Back straightway to the fields, and gather more?
Another, sooth, may do it, — but not I:
My heart is very tired, my strength is low;
My hands are full of blossoms plucked before,
Held dead within them till myself shall die.

TEARS.

THANK God, bless God, all ye who suffer not
More grief than ye can weep for. That is well —
That is light grieving! lighter, none befell,
Since Adam forfeited the primal lot.
Tears! what are tears? The babe weeps in its cot,
The mother singing; at her marriage-bell,
The bride weeps; and before the oracle
Of high-faned hills, the poet hath forgot
That moisture on his cheeks. Thank God for grace,
Whoever weeps: albeit, as some have done,

Ye grope, tear-blinded, in a desert place,
And touch but tombs, — look up! Those tears will run
Soon, in long rivers, down the lifted face,
And leave the vision clear for stars and sun.

GRIEF.

I TELL you, hopeless grief is passionless —
That only men incredulous of despair,
Half-taught in anguish, through the midnight air
Beat upward to God's throne in loud access
Of shrieking and reproach. Full desertness
In souls, as countries, lieth silent-bare
Under the blanching, vertical eye-glare
Of the absolute Heavens. Deep-hearted man, express
Grief for thy Dead in silence like to death:
Most like a monumental statue set
In everlasting watch and moveless woe,
Till itself crumble to the dust beneath.
Touch it: the marble eyelids are not wet —
If it could weep, it could arise and go.

PATIENCE TAUGHT BY NATURE.

"O DREARY life!" we cry, "O dreary life!"
And still the generations of the birds
Sing through our sighing, and the flocks and herds
Serenely live while we are keeping strife

With Heaven's true purpose in us, as a knife
Against which we may struggle. Ocean girds
Unslackened the dry land; savannah-swards
Unweary sweep; hills watch, unworn; and rife
Meek leaves drop yearly from the forest-trees,
To show, above, the unwasted stars that pass
In their old glory. O Thou God of old!
Grant me some smaller grace than comes to *these:*—
But so much patience, as a blade of grass
Grows by, contented through the heat and cold.

CHEERFULNESS TAUGHT BY REASON.

I THINK we are too ready with complaint
In this fair world of God's. Had we no hope
Indeed beyond the zenith and the slope
Of yon gray blank of sky, we might be faint
To muse upon eternity's constraint
Round our aspirant souls. But since the scope
Must widen early, is it well to droop
For a few days consumed in loss and taint?
O pusillanimous Heart, be comforted,
And like a cheerful traveller, take the road,
Singing beside the hedge. What if the bread
Be bitter in thine inn, and thou unshod
To meet the flints? At least it may be said,
"Because the way is *short*, I thank Thee, God!"

DE PROFUNDIS.

I.

THE face which, duly as the sun,
Rose up for me with life begun,
To mark all bright hours of the day
With hourly love, is dimmed away, —
And yet my days go on, go on.

II.

The tongue which, like a stream, could run
Smooth music from the roughest stone,
And every morning with "Good day"
Made each day good, is hushed away, —
And yet my days go on, go on.

III.

The heart which, like a staff, was one
For mine to lean and rest upon,
The strongest on the longest day —
With steadfast love, is caught away, —
And yet my days go on, go on.

IV.

And cold before my summer 's done,
And deaf in Nature's general tune,
And fallen too low for special fear,
And here, with hope no longer here, —
While the tears drop, my days go on.

V.

The world goes whispering to its own,
"This anguish pierces to the bone;"
And tender friends go sighing round,
"What love can ever cure this wound?"
My days go on, my days go on.

VI.

The past rolls forward on the sun
And makes all night. O dreams begun,
Not to be ended! Ended bliss,
And life that will not end in this!
My days go on, my days go on.

VII.

Breath freezes on my lips to moan:
As one alone, once not alone,
I sit and knock at Nature's door,
Heart-bare, heart-hungry, very poor,
Whose desolated days go on.

VIII.

I knock and cry, — Undone, undone!
Is there no help, no comfort, — none?
No gleaning in the wide wheat-plains
Where others drive their loaded wains?
My vacant days go on, go on.

IX.

This Nature, though the snows be down,
Thinks kindly of the bird of June:

The little red hip on the tree
Is ripe for such. What is for me,
Whose days so winterly go on?

X.

No bird am I, to sing in June,
And dare not ask an equal boon.
Good nests and berries red are Nature's
To give away to better creatures, —
And yet my days go on, go on.

XI.

I ask less kindness to be done, —
Only to loose these pilgrim-shoon,
(Too early worn and grimed) with sweet
Cool deathly touch to these tired feet,
Till days go out which now go on.

XII.

Only to lift the turf unmown
From off the earth where it has grown,
Some cubit-space, and say, "Behold,
Creep in, poor Heart, beneath this fold,
Forgetting how the days go on."

XIII.

What harm would that do? Green anon
The sward would quicken, overshone
By skies as blue; and crickets might
Have leave to chirp there day and night
While my new rest went on, went on.

XIV.

From gracious Nature have I won
Such liberal bounty? May I run
So, lizard-like, within her side,
And there be safe, who now am tried
By days that painfully go on?

XV.

— A Voice reproves me thereupon,
More sweet than Nature's when the drone
Of bees is sweetest, and more deep
Than when the rivers overleap
The shuddering pines, and thunder on, —

XVI.

God's Voice, not Nature's. Night and noon
He sits upon the great white throne
And listens for the creatures' praise.
What babble we of days and days?
The Day-spring He, whose days go on.

XVII.

He reigns above, He reigns alone:
Systems burn out and leave His throne:
Fair mists of seraphs melt and fall
Around Him, changeless amid all! —
Ancient of Days, whose days go on!

XVIII.

He reigns below, He reigns alone,
And having life in love foregone

Beneath the crown of sovran thorns,
He reigns the jealous God. Who mourns
Or rules with Him, while days go on?

XIX.

By anguish which made pale the sun,
I hear Him charge His saints that none
Among His creatures anywhere
Blaspheme against Him with despair,
However darkly days go on.

XX.

Take from my head the thorn-wreath brown!
No mortal grief deserves that crown.
O supreme Love, chief Misery,
The sharp regalia are for *Thee*
Whose days eternally go on!

XXI.

For us, — whatever 's undergone,
Thou knowest, willest what is done.
Grief may be joy misunderstood:
Only the Good discerns the good.
I trust Thee while my days go on.

XXII.

Whatever 's lost, it first was won:
We will not struggle nor impugn.
Perhaps the cup was broken here,
That Heaven's new wine might show more clear.
I praise Thee while my days go on.

XXIII.

I praise Thee while my days go on;
I love Thee while my days go on:
Through dark and dearth, through fire and frost,
With emptied arms and treasure lost,
I thank Thee while my days go on.

XXIV.

And having in Thy life-depth thrown
Being and suffering (which are one),
As a child drops his pebble small
Down some deep well, and hears it fall
Smiling — so I. *Thy days go on.*

LOVED ONCE.

I CLASSED, appraising once,
Earth's lamentable sounds, — the well-a-day
The jarring yea and nay,
The fall of kisses on unanswering clay,
The sobbed farewell, the welcome mournfuller, —
But all did leaven the air
With a less bitter leaven of sore despair
Than these words — "I loved *once!*"

And who saith, "I loved *once*"?
Not angels, whose clear eyes, love, love, foresee,
Love through eternity,
Who, by "to love," do apprehend "to be;"

Not God, called *Love*, His noble crown-name, — casting
A light too broad for blasting!
The great God, changing not from everlasting,
Saith never, "I loved *once*."

Nor ever the "*Loved Once*,"
Dost *Thou* say, Victim-Christ, misprized friend.
The cross and curse may rend;
But, having loved, Thou lovest to the end!
It is man's saying — man's. Too weak to move
One sphered star above,
Man desecrates the eternal God-word *Love*
With his No More, and Once.

How say ye, "We loved *once*,"
Blasphemers? Is your earth not cold enow,
Mourners, without that snow?
Ah, friends! and would ye wrong each other so?
And could ye say of some, whose love is known,
Whose prayers have met your own,
Whose tears have fallen for you, whose smiles have shone,
Such words, "We loved them *once*"?

Could ye, "We loved her once,"
Say calm of *me*, sweet friends, when out of sight?
When hearts of better right
Stand in between me and your happy light?

And when, as flowers kept too long in the shade,
Ye find my colors fade,
And all that is not love in me decayed? —
Such words — ye loved me *once!*

Could ye, "We loved her *once*,"
Say cold of me, when further put away
In earth's sepulchral clay?
When mute the lips which deprecate to-day? —
Not so! not then — least *then!* When Life is shriven
And Death's full joy is given, —
Of those who sit and love you up in Heaven,
Say not, "We loved them *once*."

Say never, ye loved *once!*
God is too near above, the grave below,
And all our moments go
Too quickly past our souls, for saying so.
The mysteries of Life and Death avenge
Affections light of range —
There comes no change to justify that change,
Whatever comes — loved *once!*

And yet that word of *once*
Is humanly acceptive! Kings have said,
Shaking a discrowned head,
"We ruled once;" dotards, "We once taught and led;"
Cripples once danced i' the vines; and bards approved,
Were once by scornings moved!
But love strikes one hour — *Love*. Those *never* loved,
Who dream that they loved *once*.

MY KATE.

I.

SHE was not as pretty as women I know,
And yet all your best made of sunshine and snow
Drop to shade, melt to nought in the long-trodden ways,
While she 's still remembered on warm and cold days —
My Kate.

II.

Her air had a meaning, her movements a grace;
You turned from the fairest to gaze on her face:
And when you had once seen her forehead and mouth,
You saw as distinctly her soul and her truth —
My Kate.

III.

Such a blue inner light from her eyelids outbroke,
You looked at her silence and fancied she spoke:
When she did, so peculiar yet soft was the tone,
Though the loudest spoke also, you heard her alone —
My Kate.

IV.

I doubt if she said to you much that could act
As a thought or suggestion; she did not attract
In the sense of the brilliant or wise; I infer
'T was her thinking of others, made you think of her —
My Kate.

V.

She never found fault with you, never implied
Your wrong by her right; and yet men at her side
Grew nobler, girls purer, as through the whole town
The children were gladder that pulled at her gown —
My Kate.

VI.

None knelt at her feet confessed lovers in thrall;
They knelt more to God than they used, that was all;
If you praised her as charming, some asked what you meant,
But the charm of her presence was felt when she went —
My Kate.

VII.

The weak and the gentle, the ribald and rude,
She took as she found them, and did them all good:
It always was so with her, — see what you have!
She has made the grass greener even here — with her grave —
My Kate.

VIII.

My dear one! when thou wast alive with the rest,
I held thee the sweetest and loved thee the best;
And now thou art dead, shall I not take thy part,
As thy smiles used to do for thyself, my sweet Heart —
My Kate?

A FALSE STEP.

I.

SWEET, thou hast trod on a heart,
Pass! there 's a world full of men;
And women as fair as thou art
Must do such things now and then.

II.

Thou only hast stepped unaware, —
Malice, not one can impute;
And why should a heart have been there
In the way of a fair woman's foot?

III.

It was not a stone that could trip,
Nor was it a thorn that could rend;
Put up thy proud underlip!
'T was merely the heart of a friend.

IV.

And yet peradventure one day
Thou, sitting alone at the glass,
Remarking the bloom gone away,
Where the smile in its dimplement was,

V.

And seeking around thee in vain,
From hundreds who flattered before,
Such a word as, "Oh, not in the main
Do I hold thee less precious, but more!"

VI.

Thou 'lt sigh, very like, on thy part,
" Of all I have known or can know,
I wish I had only that Heart
I trod upon ages ago ! "

A LOVER'S SONNET.

HOW do I love thee ? Let me count the ways.
I love thee to the depth and breadth and height
My soul can reach, when feeling out of sight,
For the ends of Being and Ideal Grace.
I love thee to the level of every day's
Most quiet need, by sun and candlelight.
I love thee freely, as men strive for Right ;
I love thee purely, as they turn from Praise ;
I love thee with the passion put to use
In my old griefs, and with my childhood's faith ;
I love thee with a love I seemed to lose
With my lost saints ; I love thee with the breath,
Smiles, tears, of all my life ! and, if God choose,
I shall but love thee better after death.

A PORTRAIT.

I WILL paint her as I see her :
Ten times have the lilies blown
Since she looked upon the sun.

And her face is lily-clear,
Lily-shaped, and drooped in duty
To the law of its own beauty.

Oval cheeks, encolored faintly,
  Which a trail of golden hair
  Keeps from fading off to air;

And a forehead fair and saintly,
  Which two blue eyes undershine,
  Like meek prayers before a shrine.

Face and figure of a child, —
  Though too calm, you think, and tender,
  For the childhood you would lend her.

Yet child-simple, undefiled,
  Frank, obedient, waiting still
  On the turnings of your will.

Moving light, as all young things,
  As young birds, or early wheat
  When the wind blows over it.

Only free from flutterings
  Of loud mirth that scorneth measure, —
  Taking love for her chief pleasure;

Choosing pleasures (for the rest)
  Which come softly, — just as *she*,
  When she nestles at your knee.

Quiet talk she liketh best,
  In a bower of gentle looks,
  Watering flowers, or reading books.

And her voice, it murmurs lowly,
  As a silver stream may run,
  Which yet feels, you feel, the sun.

And her smile, it seems half holy,
  As if drawn from thoughts more far
  Than our common jestings are.

And if any poet knew her,
  He would sing of her with falls
  Used in lovely madrigals.

And if any painter drew her,
  He would paint her unaware
  With a halo round her hair.

And if reader read the poem,
  He would whisper, "You have done a
  Consecrated little Una!"

And a dreamer (did you show him
  That same picture) would exclaim
  "'T is my angel, with a name!"

And a stranger — when he sees her
  In the street even — smileth stilly,
  Just as *you* would at a lily.

And all voices that address her,
  Soften, sleeken every word,
  As if speaking to a bird.

And all fancies yearn to cover
  The hard earth whereon she passes,
  With the thymy scented grasses.

And all hearts do pray, "God love her!"
  Ay, and certes, in good sooth,
  We may all be sure *He Doth.*

THE MASK.

I.

I HAVE a smiling face, she said,
  I have a jest for all I meet;
I have a garland for my head,
  And all its flowers are sweet, —
And so you call me gay, she said.

II.

Grief taught to me this smile, she said,
  And Wrong did teach this jesting bold;
These flowers were plucked from garden-bed
  While a death-chime was tolled —
And what now will you say? — she said.

III.

Behind no prison-grate, she said,
  Which slurs the sunshine half a mile,
Are captives so uncomforted,
  As souls behind a smile.
God's pity let us pray, she said.

IV.

I know my face is bright, she said.
  Such brightness dying suns diffuse!
I bear upon my forehead shed,
  The sign of what I lose, —
The ending of my day, she said.

V.

If I dared leave this smile, she said,
  And take a moan upon my mouth,
And tie a cypress round my head,
  And let my tears run smooth, —
It were the happier way, she said.

VI.

And since that must not be, she said,
  I fain your bitter world would leave.
How calmly, calmly, smile the dead,
  Who do not, therefore, grieve!
The yea of Heaven is yea, she said.

VII.

But in your bitter world, she said,
  Face-joy 's a costly mask to wear, —
And bought with pangs long nourished
  And rounded to despair.
Grief's earnest makes life's play, she said.

A CHILD'S THOUGHT OF GOD.

I.

THEY say that God lives very high!
But, if you look above the pines,
You cannot see our God. And why?

II.

And, if you dig down in the mines,
You never see Him in the gold,
Though, from Him, all that 's glory, shines.

III.

God is so good, He wears a fold
Of Heaven and earth across His face, —
Like secrets kept, for love, untold.

IV.

But still I feel that His embrace
Slides down, by thrills, through all things made,
Through sight and sound of every place,

V.

As if my tender mother laid
On my shut lids, her kisses' pressure,
Half-waking me at night; and said,
"Who kissed you through the dark, dear guesser?"

THE BEST THING IN THE WORLD.

WHAT'S the best thing in the world?
June-rose, by May dew impearled;
Sweet south wind, that means no rain;
Truth, not cruel to a friend;
Pleasure, not in haste to end;
Beauty, not self-decked and curled
Till its pride is over-plain;
Light, that never makes you wink;
Memory, that gives no pain;
Love, when, *so*, you 're loved again.
What 's the best thing in the world?
— Something out of it, I think.

THE LADY'S "YES."

"YES!" I answered you last night;
"No!" this morning, Sir, I say:
Colors, seen by candle-light,
Will not look the same by day.

When the viols played their best, —
Lamps above, and laughs below, —
Love me sounded like a jest,
Fit for *Yes* or fit for *No*.

Call me false, or call me free —
Vow, whatever light may shine,
No man on your face shall see
Any grief for change on mine.

Yet the sin is on us both —
  Time to dance is not to woo —
Wooer light makes fickle troth —
  Scorn of *me* recoils on *you* :

Learn to win a lady's faith
  Nobly, as the thing is high;
Bravely, as for life and death,
  With a loyal gravity.

Lead her from the festive boards,
  Point her to the starry skies ;
Guard her, by your truthful words,
  Pure from courtship's flatteries.

By your truth she shall be true —
  Ever true, as wives of yore;
And her *Yes* once said to you,
  Shall be *Yes* for evermore.

TRUTH.

EARTH outgrows the mythic fancies
  Sung beside her in her youth ;
And those debonair romances
Sound but dull beside the truth.
Phœbus' chariot-course is run!
Look up, poets, to the sun !

Christ hath sent us down the angels;
And the whole earth and the skies
Are illumed by altar-candles

Lit for blessed mysteries;
And a Priest's Hand, through creation,
Waveth calm and consecration.

Truth is fair; should we forego it?
Can we sigh right for a wrong?
God Himself is the best Poet,
And the Real is His song.
Sing His Truth out fair and full,
And secure His beautiful.

Truth is large. Our aspiration
Scarce embraces half we be.
Shame! to stand in His creation
And doubt Truth's sufficiency!
To think God's song unexcelling
The poor tales of our own telling.

What is true and just and honest,
What is lovely, what is pure, —
All of praise that hath admonish'd,
All of virtue, shall endure, —
These are themes for poets' uses,
Stirring nobler than the Muses.

O brave poets, keep back nothing;
Nor mix falsehood with the whole!
Look up Godward! speak the truth in
Worthy song from earnest soul!
Hold, in high poetic duty,
Truest Truth the fairest Beauty!

A CHANGED WORLD.

THE face of all the world is changed, I think,
Since first I heard the footsteps of thy soul
Move still, oh, still, beside me; as they stole
Betwixt me and the dreadful outer brink
Of obvious death, where I who thought to sink
Was caught up into love and taught the whole
Of life in a new rhythm. The cup of dole
God gave for baptism, I am fain to drink,
And praise its sweetness, sweet, with thee anear.
The names of country, heaven, are changed away,
For where thou art or shalt be, there or here;
And this — this lute and song — loved yesterday,
(The singing angels know) are only dear,
Because thy name moves right in what they say.

LOVE.

LOVE, mere love, is beautiful indeed
And worthy of acceptation. Fire is bright,
Let temple burn, or flax! An equal light
Leaps in the flame from cedar-plank or weed.
And love is fire; and when I say at need
I love thee — mark! — *I love thee!* — in thy sight
I stand transfigured, glorified aright,
With conscience of the new rays that proceed
Out of my face toward thine. There 's nothing low
In love, when love the lowest: meanest creatures

Who love God, God accepts while loving so.
And what I *feel*, across the inferior features
Of what I *am*, doth flash itself, and show
How that great work of Love enhances Nature's.

THE PROSPECT.

METHINKS we do as fretful children do,
Leaning their faces on the window-pane
To sigh the glass dim with their own breaths' stain,
And shut the sky and landscape from their view.
And thus, alas! since God the maker drew
A mystic separation 'twixt those twain, —
The life beyond us, and our souls in pain, —
We miss the prospect which we're called unto,
By grief we're fools to use. Be still and strong,
O man, my brother! hold thy sobbing breath,
And keep thy soul's large window pure from wrong, —
That so, as life's appointment issueth
Thy vision may be clear to watch along
The sunset consummation-lights of death.

ONLY A CURL.

I.

FRIENDS of faces unknown and a land
Unvisited over the sea,
Who tell me how lonely you stand
With a single gold curl in the hand
Held up to be looked at by me, —

II.

While you ask me to ponder and say
  What a father and mother can do,
With the bright fellow-locks put away
Out of reach, beyond kiss, in the clay
  Where the violets press nearer than you.

III.

Shall I speak like a poet, or run
  Into weak woman's tears for relief?
Oh children! — I never lost one, —
Yet my arm 's round my own little son,
  And Love knows the secret of Grief.

IV.

And I feel what it must be and is,
  When God draws a new angel so
Through the house of a man up to His,
With a murmur of music, you miss,
  And a rapture of light, you forego.

V.

How you think, staring on at the door,
  Where the face of your angel flashed in,
That its brightness, familiar before,
Burns off from you ever the more
  For the dark of your sorrow and sin.

VI.

"God lent him and takes him," you sigh;
— Nay, there let me break with your pain:
God 's generous in giving, say I, —
And the thing which He gives, I deny
That He ever can take back again.

VII.

He gives what He gives. . . .
. . . . . .
. . To give, . . .
Means with God not to tempt or deceive
With a cup thrust in Benjamin's sack.

VIII.

He gives what He gives. Be content!
He resumes nothing given, be sure!
God lends? Where the usurers lent
In His temple, indignant He went
And scourged away all those impure.

IX.

He lends not; but gives to the end,
As He loves to the end. If it seem
That He draws back a gift, comprehend
'T is to add to it rather, — amend,
And finish it up to your dream,

X.

Or keep, — as a mother may toys
  Too costly, though given by herself,
Till the room shall be stiller from noise,
And the children more fit for such joys,
  Kept over their heads on the shelf.

XI.

So look up, friends! you, who indeed
  Have possessed in your house a sweet piece
Of the Heaven which men strive for, must need
Be more earnest than others are, speed
  Where they loiter, persist where they cease.

XII.

You know how one angel smiles there.
  Then courage. 'T is easy for you
To be drawn by a single gold hair
Of that curl, from earth's storm and despair,
  To the safe place above us. Adieu.

A QUESTION.

"DO you think of me as I think of you?"
  It seemed not much to ask — as *I* of *you?*
We all do ask the same. No eyelids cover
Within the meekest eyes, that question over —
And little, in the world, the loving do,

But sit (among the rocks?) and listen for
The echo of their own love evermore —
"Do you think of me as I think of you?"

"Do you think of me as I think of you?"
O friends! O kindred! O dear brotherhood
Of all the world! What are we, that we should
For covenants of long affection sue?
Why press so near each other, when the touch
Is barred by graves? Not much, and yet too much,
Is this "Think of me as I think of you."

But while on mortal lips I shape anew
A sigh to mortal issues, — verily
Above the unshaken stars that see us die,
A vocal pathos rolls! and *He* who drew
All life from dust, and for all, tasted death,
By death and life and love, appealing, saith,
Do you think of Me as I think of you?

A FLOWER IN A LETTER.

MY lonely chamber next the sea,
Is full of many flowers set free
By summer's earliest duty;
Dear friends upon the garden-walk
Might stop amid their fondest talk,
To pull the least in beauty.

A thousand flowers — each seeming one
That learnt, by gazing on the sun,
  To counterfeit his shining —
Within whose leaves the holy dew
That falls from heaven, hath won anew
  A glory — in declining.

Red roses used to praises long,
Contented with the poet's song,
  The nightingale's being over;
And lilies white, prepared to touch
The whitest thought, nor soil it much,
  Of dreamer turned to lover.

Deep violets you liken to
The kindest eyes that look on you,
  Without a thought disloyal;
And cactuses a queen might don,
If weary of a golden crown,
  And still appear as royal.

Pansies for ladies all! I wis
That none who wear such brooches, miss
  A jewel in the mirror;
And tulips, children love to stretch
Their fingers down, to feel in each
  Its beauty's secret nearer.

Love's language may be talked with these
To work out choicest sentences,
  No blossoms can be meeter,

And, such being used in Eastern bowers,
Young maids may wonder if the flowers
  Or meanings be the sweeter.

And such being strewn before a bride,
Her little foot may turn aside,
  Their longer bloom decreeing;
Unless some voice's whispered sound
Should make her gaze upon the ground
  Too earnestly — for seeing.

And such being scattered on a grave,
Whoever mourneth there may have
  A type that seemeth worthy
Of a fair body hid below,
Which bloomed on earth a time ago,
  Then perished as the earthy.

And such being wreathed for worldly feast,
Across the brimming cup some guest
  Their rainbow colors viewing,
May feel them, — with a silent start, —
The covenant, his childish heart
  With nature made, — renewing.

CALLS OF THE HEART.

I.

FREE Heart, that singest to-day
  Like a bird on the first green spray;
Wilt thou go forth to the world,

Where the hawk hath his wing unfurled
To follow, perhaps, thy way?
Where the tamer, thine own, will bind,
And, to make thee sing, will blind,
While the little hip grows for the free behind?
Heart, wilt thou go?
— "No, no!
Free hearts are better so."

II.

The world, thou hast heard it told,
Has counted its robber-gold,
And the pieces stick to the hand.
The world goes riding it fair and grand,
While the truth is bought and sold!
World-voice east, world-voices west,
They call thee, Heart, from thine early rest,
"Come hither, come hither and be our guest."
Heart, wilt thou go?
— "No, no!
Good hearts are calmer so."

III.

Who calleth thee, Heart? World's Strife,
With a golden heft to his knife;
World's Mirth, with a finger fine
That draws on a board in wine,
Her blood-red plans of life;
World's Gain, with a brow knit down;

World's Fame, with a laurel crown,
Which rustles most as the leaves turn brown,—
Heart, wilt thou go?
— "No, no!
Calm hearts are wiser so."

IV.

Hast heard that Proserpina
(Once fooling) was snatched away,
To partake the dark king's seat,
And that the tears ran fast on her feet,
To think how the sun shone yesterday?
With her ankles sunken in asphodel,
She wept for the roses of earth, which fell
From her lap when the wild car drave to hell.
Heart, wilt thou go?
— "No, no!
Wise hearts are warmer so."

V.

And what is this place not seen,
Where Hearts may hide serene?—
"'T is a fair still house well-kept,
Which humble thoughts have swept,
And holy prayers made clean.
There, I sit with Love in the sun,
And we two never have done
Singing sweeter songs than are guessed by *one*."
Heart, wilt thou go?
— "No, no!
Warm hearts are fuller so."

VI.

O Heart, O Love, — I fear
That Love may be kept too near.
Hast heard, O Heart, that tale,
How love may be false and frail
To a heart once holden dear?
— "But this true Love of mine
Clings fast as the clinging vine,
And mingles pure as the grapes in wine."
Heart, wilt thou go?
— "No, no!
Full hearts beat higher so."

VII.

O Heart, O Love, beware!
Look up, and boast not there.
For who has twirled at the pin?
'Tis the world, between Death and Sin, —
The world, and the world's Despair!
And Death has quickened his pace
To the hearth, with a mocking face,
Familiar as Love, in Love's own place —
Heart, wilt thou go?
— "Still, no!
High hearts must grieve even so."

VIII.

The house is waste to-day,
The leaf has dropt from the spray,
The thorn prickt through to the song;
If summer doeth no wrong,

The winter will, they say.
Sing, Heart! what heart replies?
In vain we were calm and wise,
If the tears unkissed stand on in our eyes.
Heart, wilt thou go?
— "Ah, no!
Grieved hearts must break even so."

IX.

Howbeit all is not lost:
The warm noon ends in frost,
And worldly tongues of promise,
Like sheep-bells, die off from us
On the desert hills cloud-crossed!
Yet, through the silence, shall
Pierce the death-angel's call,
And "Come up hither," recover all.
Heart, wilt thou go?
— "I go!
Broken hearts triumph so."

A MAN'S REQUIREMENTS.

I.

LOVE me, sweet, with all thou art,
Feeling, thinking, seeing, —
Love me in the lightest part,
Love me in full being.

VII.

Love me with thy thinking soul —
  Break it to love-sighing:
Love me with thy thoughts that roll
  On through living — dying.

VIII.

Love me in thy gorgeous airs,
  When the world has crowned thee!
Love me, kneeling at thy prayers,
  With the angels round thee.

IX.

Love me pure, as musers do,
  Up the woodlands shady;
Love me gayly, fast, and true,
  As a winsome lady.

X.

Through all hopes that keep us brave,
  Further off or nigher,
Love me for the house and grave, —
  And for something higher.

XI.

Thus, if thou wilt prove me, dear,
  Woman's love no fable,
I will love *thee* — half-a-year, —
  As a man is able.

WISDOM UNAPPLIED.

I.

IF I were thou, O butterfly,
And poised my purple wings, to spy
The sweetest flowers that live and die, —

II.

I would not waste my strength on those,
As thou, — for summer hath a close,
And pansies bloom not in the snows.

III.

If I were thou, O working bee,
And all that honey-gold I see
Could delve from roses easily;

IV.

I would not hive it at man's door,
As thou, — that heirdom of my store
Should make him rich, and leave me poor.

V.

If I were thou, O eagle proud,
And screamed the thunder back aloud,
And faced the lightning from the cloud;

VI.

I would not build my eyrie-throne,
As thou, upon a crumbling stone,
Which the next storm may trample down.

VII.

If I were thou, O gallant steed,
With pawing hoof, and dancing head,
And eye outrunning thine own speed;

VIII.

I would not meeken to the rein,
As thou, nor smooth my nostril plain
From the glad desert's snort and strain.

IX.

If I were thou, red-breasted bird,
Whose song 's at shut-up window heard,
Like Love's sweet Yes too long deferred;

X.

I would not overstay delight,
As thou, but take a swallow-flight,
Till the new spring returned to sight.

XI.

While yet I spake, a touch was laid
Upon my brow, whose pride did fade,
As thus, methought, an angel said:

XII.

"If I were *thou* who sing'st this song,
Most wise for others, and most strong
In seeing right, while doing wrong,

XIII.

"I would not waste my cares, and choose,
As *thou*, — to seek what thou must lose,
Such gains as perish in the use.

XIV.

"I would not work where none can win,
As *thou*, — half way 'twixt grief and sin,
But look above, and judge within.

XV.

"I would not let my pulse beat high,
As *thou*, — toward fame's regality,
Nor yet in love's great jeopardy.

XVI.

"I would not champ the hard cold bit,
As *thou*, — of what the world thinks fit, —
But take God's freedom, using it.

XVII.

"I would not play earth's winter out,
As *thou;* but gird my soul about,
And live for life past death and doubt.

XVIII.

"Then sing, O singer! — but allow
Beast, fly, and bird, called foolish now,
Are wise (for all thy scorn) as thou!"

INSUFFICIENCY.

I.

THERE is no one beside thee, and no one above thee:
Thou standest alone, as the nightingale sings!
Yet my words that would praise thee are impotent things,
For none can express thee, though all should approve thee!
I love thee so, Dear, that I only can love thee.

II.

Say, what can I do for thee? . . . weary thee . . . grieve thee?
Lean on thy shoulder . . . new burdens to add? . . .
Weep my tears over thee . . . making thee sad?
Oh, hold me not — love me not! let me retrieve thee!
I love thee so, Dear, that I only can leave thee.

A VALEDICTION.

GOD be with thee, my beloved, — God be with thee!
Else, alone thou goest forth,
Thy face unto the north, —
Moor and pleasance, all around thee and beneath thee,
Looking equal in one snow!
While I, who try to reach thee,
Vainly follow, vainly follow,

With the farewell and the hollo,
And cannot reach thee so.
Alas! I can but teach thee,
God be with thee, my beloved, — God be with thee!

Can I teach thee, my beloved — can I teach thee?
If I said, Go left or right,
The counsel would be light, —
The wisdom, poor of all that could enrich thee!
My right would show like left;
My raising would depress thee, —
Of way, would leave behind thee, —
Of end, would leave bereft!
Alas! I can but bless thee —
May God teach thee, my beloved, — may God teach thee!

Can I bless thee, my beloved, — can I bless thee?
What blessing word can I,
From mine own tears, keep dry?
What flowers grow in my field wherewith to dress thee?
My good reverts to ill:
My calmnesses would move thee, —
My softnesses would prick thee,
My bindings up would break thee,
My crownings, curse and kill.
Alas! I can but love thee. —
May God bless thee, my beloved — may God bless thee!

Can I love thee, my beloved, — can I love thee?
And is *this* like love, to stand
With no help in my hand,
When strong as death I fain would watch above thee?
My love-kiss can deny
No tears that fall beneath it:
Mine oath of love can swear thee
From no ill that comes near thee, —
And thou diest while I breathe it,
And I — *I* can but die!
May God love thee, my beloved, — may God love thee!

JEAN INGELOW.

"God taught me to read . . .
He lent me the world for a book."

WHEN I REMEMBER.

WHEN I remember something which I had,
But which is gone, and I must do without,
I sometimes wonder how I can be glad,
Even in cowslip time when hedges sprout;
It makes me sigh to think on it — but yet
My days will not be better days, should I forget.

When I remember something promised me,
But which I never had, nor can have now,
Because the promiser we no more see
In countries that accord with mortal vow;
When I remember this, I mourn, — but yet
My happier days are not the days when I forget.

COMFORT IN THE NIGHT.

SHE thought by heaven's high wall that she did stray
Till she beheld the everlasting gate;
And she climbed up to it to long, and wait,
Feel with her hands (for it was night,) and lay
Her lips to it with kisses; thus to pray
That it might open to her desolate.
And lo! it trembled, lo! her passionate
Crying prevailed. A little, little way

It opened; there fell out a thread of light,
And she saw wingèd wonders move within;
Also she heard sweet talking as they meant
To comfort her. They said, "Who comes to-night
Shall one day certainly an entrance win;"
Then the gate closed and she awoke content.

REGRET.

O THAT word *Regret!*
There have been nights and morns when we have sighed,
"Let us alone, Regret! We are content
To throw thee all our past, so thou wilt sleep
For aye." But it is patient, and it wakes;
It hath not learned to cry itself to sleep,
But plaineth on the bed that it is hard.

We did amiss when we did wish it gone
And over: sorrows humanize our race;
Tears are the showers that fertilize this world:
And memory of things precious keepeth warm
The heart that once did hold them. They are poor
That have lost nothing: they are poorer far
Who, losing, have forgotten: they most poor
Of all, who lose and wish they *might* forget.
For life is one, and in its warp and woof
There runs a thread of gold that glitters fair,
And sometimes in the pattern shows most sweet
Where there are sombre colors. It is true
That we have wept. But O! this thread of gold,

We would not have it tarnish; let us turn
Oft and look back upon the wondrous web,
And when it shineth sometimes we shall know
That memory is possession.

HAPPY years are short.

LOVE.

WHO veileth love should first have vanquished fate.
She folded up the dream in her deep heart,
Her fair full lips were silent on that smart,
Thick fringed eyes did on the grasses wait.
What good? One eloquent blush, but one, and straight
The meaning of a life was known; for art
Is often foiled in playing nature's part,
And time holds nothing long inviolate.
Earth's buried seed springs up — slowly, or fast:
The ring came home, that one in ages past
Flung to the keeping of unfathomed seas:
And golden apples on the mystic trees
Were sought and found, and borne away at last,
Though watched of the divine Hesperides.

LOVE'S THREAD OF GOLD.

IN the night she told a story,
In the night and all night through,
While the moon was in her glory,
And the branches dropped with dew.

'T was my life she told, and round it
  Rose the years as from a deep;
In the world's great heart she found it,
  Cradled like a child asleep.
In the night I saw her weaving
  By the misty moonbeams cold,
All the weft her shuttle cleaving
  With a sacred thread of gold.
Ah! she wept me tears of sorrow,
  Lulling tears so mystic sweet;
Then she wove my last to-morrow,
  And her web lay at my feet.
Of my life she made the story:
  I must weep — so soon 't was told!
But your name did lend it glory,
  And your love its thread of gold.

FAILURE.

WE are much bound to them that do succeed:
  But, in a more pathetic sense, are bound
To such as fail. They all our loss expound;
They comfort us for work that will not speed,
And life — itself a failure.
  Ay, his deed,
Sweetest in story, who the dusk profound,
Of Hades flooded with entrancing sound,
Music's own tears, was failure. Doth it read
Therefore the worse? Ah, no! so much to dare,

He fronts the regnant Darkness on its throne. —
So much to do; impetuous even then,
He pours out love's disconsolate sweet moan —
He wins; but few for that his deed recall:
Its power is in the look which costs him all.

LOVE AND PEACE.

ONE morning, oh! so early, my belovèd, my belovèd,
All the birds were singing blithely, as if never they would cease;
'T was a thrush sang in my garden, "Hear the story, hear the story!"
And the lark sang, "Give us glory!"
And the dove said, "Give us peace!"

Then I listened, oh! so early, my belovèd, my belovèd,
To that murmur from the woodland of the dove, my dear, the dove;
When the nightingale came after, "Give us fame to sweeten duty!"
When the wren sang, "Give us beauty!"
She made answer, "Give us love!"

Sweet is spring, and sweet the morning, my belovèd, my belovèd:
Now for us doth spring, doth morning, wait upon the year's increase,

And my prayer goes up, "Oh give us, crowned in
youth with marriage glory,
Give for all our life's dear story,
Give us love, and give us peace!"

ABOVE THE CLOUDS.

AND can this be my own world?
'T is all gold and snow,
Save where the scarlet waves are hurled
Down yon gulf below.
'T is thy world, 't is my world,
City, mead, and shore,
For he that hath his own world
Hath many worlds more.

LIKE A LAVEROCK IN THE LIFT.

IT 'S we two, it 's we two, it 's we two for aye,
All the world and we two, and Heaven be our stay.
Like a laverock in the lift, sing, O bonny bride!
All the world was Adam once with Eve by his side.

What 's the world, my lass, my love! — what can it do?
I am thine, and thou art mine; life is sweet and new.
If the world have missed the mark, let it stand by,
For we two have gotten leave, and once more we 'll
try.

Like a laverock in the lift, sing, O bonny bride!
It 's we two, it 's we two, happy side by side.
Take a kiss from me thy man; now the song begins;
" All is made afresh for us, and the brave heart wins."

When the darker days come, and no sun will shine,
Thou shalt dry my tears, lass, and I 'll dry thine.
It 's we two, it 's we two, while the world 's away,
Sitting by the golden sheaves on our wedding-day.

SWEET is childhood — childhood 's over,
Kiss and part.
Sweet is youth; but youth 's a rover —
So 's my heart.
Sweet is rest; but by all showing
Toil is nigh.
We must go. Alas! the going.
Say " Good-bye."

BINDING SHEAVES.

HARK! a lover binding sheaves
To his maiden sings,
Flutter, flutter go the leaves,
Larks drop their wings.
Little brooks for all their mirth
Are not blythe as he
" Give me what the love is worth
That I give thee.

"Speech that cannot be forborne
  Tells the story through:
I sowed my love in with the corn,
  And they both grew.
Count the world full wide of girth,
  And hived honey sweet,
But count the love of more worth
  Laid at thy feet.

"Money's worth is house and land,
  Velvet coat and vest.
Work's worth is bread in hand,
  Ay, and sweet rest.
Wilt thou learn what love is worth?
  Ah! she sits above,
Sighing, 'Weigh me not with earth,
  Love's worth is love.'"

In his young heart
She reigned, with all the beauties that she had,
And all the virtues that he rightly took
For granted: there he set her with her crown,
And at her first enthronement he turned out
Much that was best away, for unaware
His thoughts grew nobler.

COLD AND QUIET.

COLD, my dear, — cold and quiet.
In their cups on yonder lea,
Cowslips fold the brown bee's diet;
So the moss enfoldeth thee.
"Plant me, plant me, O love, a lily flower —
Plant at my head, I pray you, a green tree;
And when our children sleep," she sighed, "at the dusk hour,
And when the lily blossoms, O come out to me!"

Lost, my dear? Lost! nay, deepest
Love is that which loseth least:
Through the night-time while thou sleepest,
Still I watch the shrouded east.
Near thee, near thee, my wife that aye liveth,
"Lost" is no word for such a love as mine;
Love from her past to me a present giveth,
And love itself doth comfort, making pain divine.

Rest, my dear, rest. Fair showeth
That which was, and not in vain
Sacred have I kept, God knoweth,
Love's last words atween us twain.
"Hold by our past, my only love, my lover;
Fall not, but rise, O love, by loss of me!"
Boughs from our garden, white with bloom hang over.
Love, now the children slumber, I come out to thee.

Ah, well! I would not overstate that woe,
For I have had some blessings, little care;
But since the falling of that heavy blow,
God's earth has never seemed to me so fair.

THE HIGH TIDE ON THE COAST OF LINCOLNSHIRE.

1571.

THE old mayor climbed the belfry tower,
The ringers ran by two, by three;
"Pull, if ye never pulled before;
Good ringers, pull your best," quoth he.
"Play uppe, play uppe, O Boston bells!
Ply all your changes, all your swells,
Play uppe 'The Brides of Enderby.'"

Men say it was a stolen tyde—
The Lord that sent it, He knows all;
But in myne ears doth still abide
The message that the bells let fall:
And there was nought of strange, beside
The flight of mews and peewits pied
By millions crouched on the old sea wall.

I sat and spun within the doore,
My thread brake off, I raised myne eyes;
The level sun, like ruddy ore,
Lay sinking in the barren skies;

And dark against day's golden death
She moved where Lindis wandereth
My sonne's faire wife, Elizabeth.

"Cusha! Cusha! Cusha!" calling,
Ere the early dews were falling,
Farre away I heard her song.
"Cusha! Cusha!" all along;
Where the reedy Lindis floweth
Floweth, floweth,
From the meads where melick groweth
Faintly came her milking song, —

"Cusha! Cusha! Cusha!" calling,
"For the dews will soon be falling;
Leave your meadow grasses mellow,
Mellow, mellow;
Quit your cowslips, cowslips yellow;
Come uppe Whitefoot, come uppe Lightfoot,
Quit the stalks of parsley hollow,
Hollow, hollow;
Come uppe Jetty, rise and follow,
From the clovers lift your head;
Come uppe Whitefoot, come uppe Lightfoot,
Come uppe Jetty, rise and follow,
Jetty, to the milking shed."

If it be long, aye, long ago,
When I beginne to think howe long,
Againe I hear the Lindis flow,
Swift as an arrowe, sharpe and strong;

And all the aire it seemeth mee
Bin full of floating bells (sayth shee),
That ring the tune of Enderby.

Alle fresh the level pasture lay,
  And not a shadowe mote be seene,
Save where full fyve good miles away
  The steeple towered from out the greene;
And lo! the great bell farre and wide
Was heard in all the country side
That Saturday at eventide.

The swanherds where their sedges are
  Moved on in sunset's golden breath,
The shepherde lads I heard afarre,
  And my sonne's wife, Elizabeth;
Till floating o'er the grassy sea
Came down that kyndly message free
The "Brides of Mavis Enderby."

Then some looked uppe into the sky,
  And all along where Lindis flows
To where the goodly vessels lie,
  And where the lordly steeple shows.
They sayde, "And why should this thing be
What danger lowers by land or sea?
They ring the tune of Enderby!

"For evil news from Mablethorpe,
  Of pyrate galleys warping down;
For shippes ashore beyond the scorpe,
  They have not spared to wake the towne;

But while the west bin red to see,
And storms be none, and pyrates flee,
Why ring, 'The Brides of Enderby'?"

I looked without, and lo! my sonne
  Came riding down with might and main;
He raised a shout as he drew on,
  Till all the welkin rang again,
"Elizabeth! Elizabeth!"
(A sweeter woman ne'er drew breath
Than my sonne's wife, Elizabeth.)

"The olde sea wall (he cried) is downe,
  The rising tide comes on apace,
And boats adrift in yonder towne
  Go sailing uppe the market-place."
He shook as one that looks on death:
"God save you, mother!" straight he saith:
"Where is my wife, Elizabeth?"

"Good sonne, where Lindis winds away
  With her two bairns I marked her long:
And ere yon bells beganne to play
  Afar I heard her milking song."
He looked across the grassy sea,
To right, to left, "Ho Enderby!"
They rang "The Brides of Enderby!"

With that he cried and beat his breast;
  For lo! along the river's bed
A mighty eygre reared his crest,
  And uppe the Lindis raging sped.

It swept with thunderous noises loud;
Shaped like a curling snow-white cloud,
Or like a demon in a shroud.

And rearing Lindis backward pressed,
  Shook all her trembling bankes amaine:
Then madly at the eygre's breast
  Flung uppe her weltering walls again.
Then bankes came downe with ruin and rout —
Then beaten foam flew round about —
Then all the mighty floods were out.

So farre, so fast the eygre drave,
  The heart had hardly time to beat,
Before a shallow seething wave
  Sobbed in the grasses at oure feet;
The feet had hardly time to flee
Before it brake against the knee,
And all the world was in the sea.

Upon the roofe we sate that night,
  The noise of bells went sweeping by:
I marked the lofty beacon light
  Stream from the church tower, red and high —
A lurid mark and dread to see:
And awsome bells they were to mee,
That in the dark rang "Enderby."

They rang the sailor lads to guide
  From roofe to roofe who fearless rowed;
And I — my sonne was at my side,
  And yet the ruddy beacon glowed;

And yet he moaned beneath his breath,
"O come in life, or come in death!
O lost! my love, Elizabeth."

And didst thou visit him no more?
  Thou didst, thou didst, my daughter deare,
The waters laid thee at his doore,
  Ere yet the early dawn was clear.
Thy pretty bairns in fast embrace,
The lifted sun shone on thy face
Downe drifted to thy dwelling-place.

That flow strewed wrecks about the grass,
  That ebbe swept out the flocks to sea;
A fatal ebbe and flow, alas!
  To manye more than myne and me;
But each will mourn his own (she saith.)
And sweeter woman ne'er drew breath
Than my sonne's wife Elizabeth.

I shall never hear her more
By the reedy Lindis shore,
"Cusha, Cusha, Cusha!" calling,
Ere the early dews be falling;
I shall never hear her song,
"Cusha, Cusha!" all along,
Where the sunny Lindis floweth,
      Goeth, floweth;
From the meads where melick groweth,
Where the water winding down,
Onward floweth to the town.

I shall never see her more
Where the reeds and rushes quiver,
Shiver, quiver:
Stand beside the sobbing river,
Sobbing, throbbing, in its falling,
To the sandy lonesome shore;
I shall never hear her calling,
"Leave your meadow grasses mellow,
Mellow, mellow:
Quit your cowslips, cowslips yellow;
Come uppe Whitefoot, come uppe Lightfoot
Quit your pipes of parsley hollow,
Hollow, hollow;
Come uppe Lightfoot, rise and follow,
Lightfoot, Whitefoot,
From your clovers lift the head;
Come uppe Jetty, follow, follow,
Jetty, to the milking shed."

SLEEP.

O SLEEP, we are beholden to thee, sleep,
Thou bearest angels to us in the night,
Saints out of heaven with palms. Seen by thy light
Sorrow is some old tale that goeth not deep;
Love is a pouting child.

. . . . . .

Sleep, in the world to come how strange 't will be
Never to want, never to wish for thee!

A REVERIE.

WHEN I do sit apart
And commune with my heart,
She brings me forth the treasures once my own:
Shows me a happy place
Where leaf-buds swelled apace,
And wasting rims of snow in sunlight shone.

Rock, in a mossy glade,
The larch-trees lend thee shade,
That just begin to feather with their leaves:
From out thy crevice deep
White tufts of snowdrops peep,
And melted rime drips softly from thine eaves.

Ah, rock, I know, I know
That yet thy snowdrops grow,
And yet doth sunshine flick them through the tree,
Where sheltering branches hide
The cottage at its side,
That nevermore will shade or shelter me.

Once to that cottage door,
In happy days of yore,
My little love made footprints in the snow.
She was so glad of spring,
She helped the birds to sing,
I know she dwells there yet — the rest I do not know

They sang, and would not stop,
While drop, and drop, and drop,
I heard the melted rime in sunshine fall:
And narrow wandering rills
Where leaned the daffodils,
Murmured and murmured on, and that was all.

I think, but cannot tell,
I think she loved me well,
And some dear fancy with my future twined.
But I shall never know,
Hope faints, and lets it go,
That passionate want forbid to speak its mind.

LITTLE clouds lie still, like flocks of sheep,
Or vessels sailing in God's other deep.

WORK.

LIKE coral insects multitudinous
The minutes are whereof our life is made.
They build it up as in the deep's blue shade
It grows, it comes to light, and then, and thus
For both there is an end. The populous
Sea-blossoms close, our minutes that have paid
Life's debt of work are spent; the work is laid
Before our feet that shall come after us.
We may not stay to watch if it will speed,

The bard if on some luter's string his song
Live sweetly yet; the hero if his star
Doth shine. Work is its own best earthly meed,
Else have we none more than the sea-born throng
Who wrought these marvellous isles that bloom afar.

THOUGH ALL GREAT DEEDS.

THOUGH all great deeds were proved but fables fine,
Though earth's old story could be told anew,
Though the sweet fashions loved of them that sue
Were empty as the ruined Delphian shrine —
Though God did never man, in words benign,
With sense of His great Fatherhood endue,
Though life immortal were a dream untrue,
And He that promised it were not divine —
Though soul, though spirit were not, and all hope
Reaching beyond the bourne, melted away;
Though virtue had no goal and good no scope,
But both were doomed to end with this our clay —
Though all these were not, — to the ungraced heir
Would this remain, — to live, as though they were.

THE LONG WHITE SEAM.

AS I came round the harbor buoy,
The lights began to gleam,
No wave the land-locked water stirred,
The crags were white as cream;

And I marked my love by candle-light
  Sewing her long white seam.
    It 's aye sewing ashore, my dear,
      Watch and steer at sea,
    It 's reef and furl, and haul the line.
      Set sail and think of thee.

I climbed to reach her cottage door;
  O sweetly my love sings!
Like a shaft of light her voice breaks forth,
  My soul to meet it springs
As the shining water leaped of old
  When stirred by angel wings.
    Aye longing to list anew,
      Awake and in my dream,
    But never a song she sang like this
      Sewing her long white seam.

Fair fall the lights, the harbor lights,
  That brought me in to thee,
And peace drop down on that low roof
  For the sight that I did see,
And the voice, my dear, that rang so clear
  All for the love of me.
    For O, for O, with brows bent low
      By the candle's flickering gleam,
    Her wedding gown it was she wrought
      Sewing the long white seam.

OUR only greatness is that we aspire.

MARRIED LOVERS.

COME away, the clouds are high,
Put the flashing needles by.
Many days are not to spare,
Or to waste, my fairest fair!
All is ready. Come to-day,
For the nightingale her lay,
When she findeth that the whole
Of her love, and all her soul,
Cannot forth of her sweet throat,
Sobs the while she draws her breath,
And the bravery of her note
In a few days altereth.

Come, ere she despond, and see
In a silent ecstasy
Chestnuts heave for hours and hours
All the glory of their flowers
To the melting blue above,
That broods over them like love.
Leave the garden walls, where blow
Apple-blossoms pink, and low
Ordered beds of tulips fine.
Seek the blossoms made divine
With a scent that is their soul.
These are soulless. Bring the white
Of thy gown to bathe in light
Walls for narrow hearts. The whole
Earth is found, and air and sea,
Not too wide for thee and me.

Not too wide, and yet thy face
Gives the meaning of all space;
And thine eyes, with starbeams fraught,
Hold the measure of all thought;
For of them my soul besought,
And was shown a glimpse of thine—
A veiled vestal, with divine
Solace, in sweet love's despair,
For that life is brief as fair.
Who hath most, he yearneth most,
Sure, as seldom heretofore,
Somewhere of the gracious more.
Deepest joy the least shall boast,
Asking with new-opened eyes
The remainder: that which lies
O, so fair! but not all conned—
O, so near! and yet beyond.

Come, and in the woodland sit,
Seem a wonted part of it.
Then, while moves the delicate air,
And the glories of thy hair
Little flickering sun-rays strike,
Let me see what thou art like;
For great love enthralls me so,
That, in sooth, I scarcely know.
Show me, in a house all green,
Save for long gold wedges' sheen,
Where the flies, white sparks of fire,
Dart and hover and aspire,
And the leaves, air-stirred on high,

Feel such joy they needs must sigh,
And the untracked grass makes sweet
All fair flowers to touch thy feet,
And the bees about them hum.
All the world is waiting. Come!

THERE is nothing held so dear
As love, if only it be hard to win.

A LOVER'S SONG.

SHE was but a child, a child,
And I a man grown;
Sweet she was, and fresh, and wild,
And I thought my own.
What could I do? The long grass groweth,
The long wave floweth with a murmur on:
The why and the wherefore of it all who knoweth?
Ere I thought to lose her she was grown—and gone.
This day or that day in warm spring weather,
The lamb that was tame will yearn to break its tether.
"But if the world wound thee," I said, "come back to me,
Down in the dell wishing—wishing, wishing for thee."

The dews hang on the white may,
Like a ghost it stands,
All in the dusk before day
That folds the dim lands;

Dark fell the skies when once belated,
  Sad, and sorrow-fated I missed the sun;
But wake heart, and sing, for not in vain I waited.
  O clear, O solemn dawning, lo, the maid is won!
Sweet dews, dry early on the grass and clover,
Lest the bride wet her feet when she walks over;
Shine to-day, sunbeams, and make all fair to see:
Down the dell she 's coming — coming with me.

A BIRTHDAY.

A BIRTHDAY: — and now a day that rose
  With much of hope, with meaning rife —
A thoughtful day from dawn to close;
  The middle day of human life.

. . . . . .

There are some days that die not out,
  Nor alter by reflection's power,
Whose converse calm, whose words devout,
  For ever rest, the spirit's dower.

And they are days when drops a veil —
  A mist upon the distance past;
And while we say to peace — "All hail!"
  We hope that always it shall last.

DAUGHTERS OF EVE.

DAUGHTERS of Eve! your mother did not well:
She laid the apple in your father's hand,
And we have read, O wonder! what befell, —
The man was not deceived, nor yet could stand:
He chose to lose, for love of her, his throne, —
With her could die, but could not live alone.

Daughters of Eve! he did not fall so low,
Nor fall so far, as that sweet woman fell,
For something better, than as gods to know,
That husband in that home left off to dwell:
For this, till love be reckoned less than lore,
Shall man be first and best for evermore.

Daughters of Eve! it was for your dear sake
The world's first hero died an uncrowned king;
For God's great pity touched the grand mistake,
And made his married love a sacred thing:
For yet his nobler sons, if aught be true,
Find the lost Eden in their love to you.

I AM glad to think
I am not bound to make the wrong go right:
But only to discover, and to do
With cheerful heart, the work that God appoints.

LITTLE GOLDILOCKS.

GOLDILOCKS sat on the grass,
Trying up of posies rare.
Hardly could a sunbeam pass
Through the flood that was her hair.
Purple orchis lasteth long.
Primrose flowers are pale and clear;
O the maiden sang a song
It would do you good to hear!

Sad before her leaned the boy,
"Goldilocks that I love well,
Happy creature fair and coy,
Think o' me, sweet Amabel."
Goldilocks she shook apart,
Looked with doubtful, doubtful eyes,
Like a blossom in her heart
Opened out her first surprise.

As a gloriole sign o' grace,
Goldilocks, ah fall and flow,
On the blooming, childlike face,
Dimple, dimple, come and go.
Give her time; on grass and sky
Let her gaze if she be fain,
As they looked ere he drew nigh,
They will never look again.

Ah! the playtime she has known,
While her goldilocks grew long,
Is it like a nestling flown,
Childhood over like a song?
Yes, the boy may clear his brow,
Though she thinks to say him nay,
When she sighs, "I cannot now,
Come again some other day."

THE NIGHTINGALE HEARD BY THE UNSATISFIED HEART.

WHEN in a May-day hush
Chanteth the Missel-thrush
The harp o' the heart makes answer with murmurous stirs;
When Robin-redbreast sings,
We think on budding springs,
And Culvers when they coo are love's remembrancers.

But thou in the trance of light
Stayest the feeding night,
And Echo makes sweet her lips with the utterance wise,
And casts at our glad feet,
In a wisp of fancies fleet,
Life's fair, life's unfulfilled, impassioned prophecies.

Her central thought full well
Thou hast the wit to tell,
To take the sense o' the dark and to yield it so;

The moral of moonlight
To set in a cadence bright,
And sing our loftiest dream that we thought none did
know.

I have no nest as thou,
Bird on the blossoming bough,
Yet over thy tongue outfloweth the song o' my soul,
Chanting, "Forego thy strife,
The spirit out-acts the life,
But *much* is seldom theirs who can perceive *the whole.*"

SEA-MEWS IN WINTER TIME.

I WALKED beside a dark gray sea,
And said, "O world, how cold thou art!
Thou poor white world, I pity thee,
For joy and warmth from thee depart.

"The sea is cold, and dark its rim,
Winter sits cowering on the wold,
And I beside this watery brim,
Am also lonely, also cold."

I spoke, and drew toward a rock,
Where many mews made twittering sweet;
Their wings upreared, the clustering flock
Did pat the sea-grass with their feet.

Joy companied with every cry,
  Joy in their food, in that keen wind,
That heaving sea, that shaded sky,
  And in themselves, and in their kind.

Then all at once a flight, and fast
  The lovely crowd flew out to sea;
If mine own life had been recast,
  Earth had not looked more changed to me.

"Where is the cold? . . .
. . . . . .
The cold is not in crag, nor scar,
  Not in the snows that lap the lea,
Not in yon wings that beat afar,
  Delighting, on the crested sea.

No, nor in yon exultant wind
  That shakes the oak and bends the pine.
Look near, look in, and thou shalt find
  No sense of cold, fond fool, but thine!"

THE DAWN OF LOVE.

WHEN she came
Before him first, he looked at her and thought
On certain things, and wished they were undone,
Because her girlish innocence, the grace
Of her unblemished pureness, wrought in him
A longing and aspiring, and a shame
To think how wicked was the world — that world
Which he must walk in, — while from her (and such

As she was) it was hidden ; there was made
A clean path, and the girl moved on like one
In some enchanted ring.

. . . . . .

But yet the fortunate, the young
Loved, and much cared-for, entered on his strife, —
A stirring of the heart, a quickening keen
Of sight and hearing to the delicate
Beauty and music of an altered world;
Began to walk in that mysterious light
Which doth reveal and yet transform: which gives
Destiny, sorrow, youth, and death, and life,
Intenser meaning; in disquieting
Lifts up; a shining light: men call it *Love.*

. . . . . .

The spring came on:
Looking to wed in April all her thoughts
Grew loving: she would fain the world had waxed
More happy with her happiness, and oft
Walking among the flowery woods she felt
Their loveliness reach down into her heart,
And knew with them the ecstasies of growth,
The rapture that was satisfied with light,
The pleasure of the leaf in exquisite
Expansion, through the lovely longed-for spring.

. . . . . .

She knew
That in the stronghold of his heart, held back,
Hidden reserves of measureless content
Kept down with happy thought, for her sake mute.

. . . . . .

THE COMING IN OF THE SHIP.

THE moon is bleached as white as wool,
And just dropping under;
Every star is gone but three,
And they hang far asunder, —
There 's a sea-ghost all in gray,
A tall shape of wonder!

I am not satisfied with sleep, —
The night is not ended,
But look how the sea-ghost comes,
With wan skirts extended,
Stealing up in this weird hour,
Where light and dark are blended.

A vessel! To the old pier end
Her happy course she 's keeping;
I heard them name her yesterday:
Some were pale with weeping;
Some with their heart-hunger sighed
She 's in — and they are sleeping.

O! now with fancied greetings blest,
They comfort their long aching:
The sea of sleep hath borne to them
What would not come with waking,
And the dreams shall be most true
In their blissful breaking.

The stars are gone, the rose-bloom comes —
No blush of maid is sweeter:
The red sun, half way out of bed,
Shall be the first to greet her.
None tell the news, yet sleepers wake,
And rise and run to meet her.

Their lost they have, they hold; from pain
A keener bliss they borrow,
How natural is joy, my heart!
How easy after sorrow!
For once, the best is come that hope
Promised them "to-morrow."

LOVE — such a slender moon, going up and up,
Waxing so fast from night to night,
And swelling like an orange flower-bud.

A DEAD YEAR.

I TOOK a year out of my life and story —
A dead year, and I said, "I will hew thee a tomb!"
. . . . . .

I took the year out of my life and story,
The dead year, and said, "I have hewed thee a tomb!
'All the kings of the nations lie in glory;'
Cased in cedar and shut in a sacred gloom:
But for the sword, and the sceptre and diadem,
Sure thou didst reign like them."

So I laid her with those tyrants old and hoary,
According to my vow;
For I said, "The kings of the nations lie in glory,
And so shalt thou!"

"Rock," I said, "thy ribs are strong,
That I bring thee guard it long;
Hide the light from buried eyes —
Hide it, lest the dead arise."
"Year," I said, and turned away,
"I am free of thee this day:
All that we two only know,
I forgive, and I forego;
So thy face no more I meet,
In the field or in the street."

Thus we parted, she and I;
Life hid death, and put it by;
Life hid death, and said, "Be free!
I have no more need of thee."
No more need! O, mad mistake,
With repentance in its wake!
Ignorant, and rash, and blind;
Life had left the grave behind;
But had locked within its hold,
With the spices and the gold,
All she had to keep her warm
In the raging of the storm.

Scarce the sunset bloom was gone,
And the little stars outshone,

Ere the dead year, stiff and stark,
Drew me to her in the dark;
Death drew life to come to her,
Beating at her sepulchre,
Crying out, "How can I part
With the best share of my heart;
Lo, it lies upon the bier,
Captive, with the buried year.
O my heart!" And I fell prone
Weeping at the sealèd stone;

"Year among the shades," I said,
"Since I live, and thou art dead,
Let my captive heart be free,
Like a bird to fly to me."
And I stayed some voice to win,
But none answered from within;
And I kissed the door — and night
Deepened till the stars waxed bright;
And I saw them set and wane,
And the world turn green again.

"So," I whispered, "open door,
I must tread this palace floor:"

. . . . . .

And I entered. On the bier
Quiet lay the buried year;
I sat down where I could see
Life without, and sunshine free,
Death within. And I between,
Waited my own heart to wean

From the shroud that shaded her
In the rock-hewn sepulchre;
Waited till the dead should say,
"Heart be free of me this day"—
Waited with a patient will—
And I wait between them still.

I take the dead year back to my life and story,
The dead year, and say, "I will share in thy tomb.
'All the kings of the nations lie in glory;'
Cased in cedar, and shut in a sacred gloom;
They reigned in their lifetime with sceptre and diadem,
But thou excellest them;
For life doth make thy grave her oratory,
And the crown is still on thy brow:
'All the kings of the nations lie in glory,'
And so dost thou."

SONG OF GOING AWAY.

"OLD man, upon the green hillside,
With yellow flowers besprinkled o'er,
How long in silence wilt thou bide
At this low stone door?

"I stoop: within 't is dark and still:
But shadowy paths methinks there be,
And lead they far into the hill?"
"Traveller, come and see."

"'T is dark, 't is cold, and hung with gloom:
  I care not now within to stay;
For thee and me is scarcely room,
  I will hence away."

"Not so, not so, thou youthful guest,
  Thy foot shall issue forth no more;
Behold the chamber of thy rest,
  And the closing door!"

"O, have I 'scaped the whistling ball,
  And striven on smoky fields of fight,
And scaled the 'leaguered city's wall
  In the dangerous night;

"And borne my life unharmèd still
  Through foaming gulfs of yeasty spray,
To yield it on a grassy hill
  At the noon of day?"

"Peace! Say thy prayers, and go to sleep,
  Till *some time*, *One* my seal shall break,
And deep shall answer unto deep,
  When He crieth, '*Awake!*'"

LOOK UP.

"O LAMB of God, I love my child so *much!*
  He stole away to Thee while we two slept,
But give him back, for Thou hast many such;
And as for me I have but one. O deign,
Dear Pity of God, to give him me again."

. . . . . .

Lo! her little child was gone indeed!
The sleep that knows no waking he had slept,
Folded to heaven's own heart; in rainbow brede
Clothed and made glad, while they two mourned and wept,
But in the drinking of their bitter cup
The sweet voice spoke once more, and sighed, "Look up!"

They heard, and straightway answered, "Even so;
For what abides that we should look on here?
The heavens are better than this earth below,
They are of more account and far more dear.
We will look up, for all most sweet and fair,
Most pure, most excellent, is garnered *There*."

MORE LIFE.

WHEN I reflect how little I have done,
And add to that how little I have seen,
Then furthermore how little I have won
Of joy, or good, how little known, or been:
I long for other life more full, more keen,
And yearn to change with such as well have run, —
Yet reason mocks me — nay, the soul, I ween,
Granted her choice would dare to change with none.

ADELAIDE A. PROCTER.

Listen, and I will tell thee
The song Creation sings,
From the humming of bees in the heather,
To the flutter of angels' wings.

. . . . . .

No creature of God's too lowly
To murmur peace and praise.

GOLDEN DAYS.

GOLDEN days — where are they?
Pilgrims east and west
Cry: if we could find them
We would pause and rest;
We would pause and rest a little
From our long and weary ways: —
Where are they, then, where are they —
Golden days?

Golden days — where are they?
Ask of childhood's years,
Still untouched by sorrow,
Still undimmed by tears;
Ah, they seek a phantom Future,
Crowned with brighter, starry rays, —
Where are they, then, where are they —
Golden days?

Golden days — where are they?
Has Love learnt the spell
That will charm them hither,
Near our hearth to dwell?
Insecure are all her treasures,
Restless is her anxious gaze: —
Where are they, then, where are they, —
Golden days?

Golden days — where are they?
  Farther up the hill
I can hear the echo
  Faintly calling still:
Faintly calling, faintly dying,
  In a far-off misty haze: —
Where are they, then, where are they —
    Golden days?

EVENING HYMN.

THE shadows of the evening hours
  Fall from the darkening sky;
Upon the fragrance of the flowers
  The dews of evening lie;
Before Thy throne, O Lord of heaven,
  We kneel at close of day;
Look on Thy children from on high
  And hear us while we pray.

The sorrows of Thy servants, Lord,
  O do not Thou despise;
But let the incense of our prayers
  Before Thy mercy rise,
The brightness of the coming night
  Upon the darkness rolls;
With hopes of future glory chase
  The shadows on our souls.

Slowly the rays of daylight fade;
  So fade within our heart
The hopes in earthly love and joy,
  That one by one depart;
Slowly the bright stars, one by one,
  Within the Heavens shine:—
Give us, O Lord, fresh hopes in Heaven
  And trust in things divine.

Let peace, O Lord, Thy peace, O God,
  Upon our souls descend;
From midnight fears and perils, Thou
  Our trembling hearts defend;
Give us a respite from our toil,
  Calm and subdue our woes;
Through the long day we suffer, Lord,
  O give us now repose.

A DREAM.

ALL yesterday I was spinning,
  Sitting alone in the sun;
And the dream that I spun was so lengthy,
  It lasted till day was done.

I heeded not cloud or shadow
  That flitted over the hill,
Or the humming-bees, or the swallows,
  Or the trickling of the rill.

I took the threads for my spinning,
  All of blue summer air,
And a flickering ray of sunlight
  Was woven in here and there.

The shadows grew longer and longer,
  The evening wind passed by,
And the purple splendor of sunset
  Was flooding the western sky.

But I could not leave my spinning,
  For so fair my dream had grown,
I heeded not, hour by hour,
  How the silent day had flown.

At last the gray shadows fell round me,
  And the night came dark and chill,
And I rose and ran down the valley,
  And left it on the hill.

I went up the hill this morning
  To the place where my spinning lay, —
There was nothing but glistening dewdrops
  Remained of my dream to-day.

MINISTERING ANGELS.

ANGELS of light, spread your bright wings and keep
  Near me at morn;
Nor in the starry eve, nor midnight deep,
  Leave me forlorn.

From all dark spirits of unholy power
Guard my weak heart
Circle around me in each perilous hour,
And take my part.

From all foreboding thoughts and dangerous fears
Keep me secure;
Teach me to hope, and through the bitterest tears
Still to endure.

If lonely in the road so fair and wide
My feet should stray,
Then through a rougher, safer pathway guide
Me day by day.

Should my heart faint at its unequal strife,
O still be near!
Shadow the perilous sweetness of this life
With holy fear.

Then leave me not alone in this bleak world,
Where'er I roam,
And at the end, with your bright wings unfurled,
O take me home!

LINKS WITH HEAVEN.

OUR God in Heaven, from that holy place,
To each of us an Angel guide has given;
But Mothers of dead children have more grace,
For they give Angels to their God and Heaven.

How can a Mother's heart feel cold or weary
  Knowing her dearer self safe, happy, warm?
How can she feel her road too dark or dreary
  Who knows her treasure sheltered from the storm.

How can she sin? Our hearts may be unheeding,
  Our God forgot, our holy saints defied;
But can a Mother hear her dead child pleading,
  And thrust those little angel hands aside?

Those little hands stretched down to draw her ever
  Nearer to God by Mother love: — we all
Are blind and weak, yet surely she can never,
  With such a stake in Heaven, fail or fall.

She knows that when the mighty Angels raise
  Chorus in Heaven, one little silver tone
Is hers forever, that one little praise,
  One little happy voice, is all her own.

. . . . . .

Ah, Saints in Heaven may pray with earnest will
  And pity for their weak and erring brothers:
Yet, there is prayer in Heaven more tender still, —
  The little Children pleading for their Mothers.

A CASTLE IN THE AIR.

I BUILT myself a castle,
  So noble, grand and fair;
I built myself a castle,
  A castle — in the air.

The fancies of my twilights
  That fade in sober truth,
The longing of my sorrow,
  And the vision of my youth;

The plans of joyful futures;
  So dear they used to seem;
The prayer that rose unbidden,
  Half prayer — and half a dream;

The hopes that died unuttered
  Within this heart of mine: —
For all these tender treasures
  My castle was the shrine.

I looked at all the castles
  That rise to grace the land,
But I never saw another
  So stately or so grand.

And now you see it shattered,
  My castle in the air;
It lies a dreary ruin,
  All desolate and bare.

I cannot build another,
  I saw that one decay;
And strength and heart and courage
  Died out the self-same day.

Yet still, beside that ruin,
  With hopes as deep and fond,
I waited with an infinite longing,
  Only — I look beyond.

FRIEND SORROW.

DO not cheat thy Heart and tell her,
  "Grief will pass away,
Hope for fairer times in future,
  And forget to-day." —
Tell her, if you will, that sorrow
  Need not come in vain;
Tell her that the lesson taught her
  Far outweighs the pain.

Cheat her not with the old comfort,
  "Soon she will forget," —
Bitter truth, alas! but matter
  Rather for regret;
Bid her not "Seek other pleasures,
  Turn to other things:" —
Rather nurse her cagèd sorrow
  Till the captive sings.

Rather bid her go forth bravely,
  And the stranger greet;
Not as foe, with spear and buckler,
  But as dear friends meet;

Bid her with a strong clasp hold her,
  By her dusky wings,
Listening for the murmured blessing
  Sorrow always brings.

JUDGE NOT.

JUDGE not . . .
  The fall thou darest to despise —
    May be . . .
. . . that he may rise
    And take a firmer, surer stand:
Or, trusting less to earthly things,
May henceforth learn to use his wings.

ONE BY ONE.

ONE by one the sands are flowing,
  One by one the moments fall;
Some are coming, some are going;
  Do not strive to grasp them all.

One by one thy duties wait thee,
  Let thy whole strength go to each,
Let no future dreams elate thee,
  Learn thou first what these can teach.

One by one (bright gifts from Heaven)
  Joys are sent thee here below;
Take them readily when given,
  Ready too to let them go.

One by one thy griefs shall meet thee,
  Do not fear an armèd band;
One will fade as others greet thee;
  Shadows passing through the land.

Do not look on life's long sorrow;
  See how small each moment's pain;
God will help thee for to-morrow,
  So each day begin again.

Every hour that fleets so slowly
  Has its task to do or bear;
Luminous the crown, and holy,
  When each gem is set with care.

Do not linger with regretting,
  Or for passing hours despond;
Nor, the daily toil forgetting,
  Look too eagerly beyond.

Hours are golden links, God's token,
  Reaching heaven; but one by one
Take them, lest the chain be broken
  Ere the pilgrimage be done.

MY JOURNAL.

IT is a dreary evening;
  The shadows rise and fall:
With strange and ghostly changes,
  They flicker on the wall.

Make the charred logs burn brighter;
  I will show you, by their blaze,
The half-forgotten record
  Of bygone things and days.

Bring here the ancient volume;
  The clasp is old and worn,
The gold is dim and tarnished,
  And the faded leaves are torn.

The dust has gathered on it, —
  There are so few who care
To read what Time has written
  Of joy and sorrow there.

Look at the first fair pages;
  Yes, I remember all:
The joys now seem so trivial,
  The griefs so poor and small.

Let us read the dreams of glory
  That childish fancy made;
Turn to the next few pages,
  And see how soon they fade.

Here, where still waiting, dreaming,
  For some ideal Life,
The young heart all unconscious
  Had entered on the strife.

See how this page is blotted:
  What, could those tears be mine?
How coolly I can read you
  Each blurred and trembling line.

Now I can reason calmly,
  And, looking back again,
Can see divinest meaning
  Threading each separate pain.

Here strong resolve — how broken;
  Rash hope, and foolish fear,
And prayers which God in pity
  Refused to grant or hear.

Nay, I will turn the pages
  To where the tale is told
Of how a dawn diviner
  Flushed the dark clouds with gold.

And see, that light has gilded
  The story — nor shall set;
And, though in mist and shadow,
  You know I see it yet.

Here — well, it does not matter,
  I promised to read all;
I know not why I falter,
  Or why my tears should fall.

You see each grief is noted;
  Yet it was better so —
I can rejoice to-day — the pain
  Was over, long ago.

I read — my voice is failing,
  But you can understand
How the heart beat that guided
  This weak and trembling hand.

Pass over that long struggle,
  Read where the comfort came,
Where the first time is written
  Within the book your name.

Again it comes, and oftener,
  Linked, as it now must be,
With all the joy or sorrow
  That Life may bring to me.

So all the rest — you know it;
  Now shut the clasp again,
And put aside the record
  Of bygone hours of pain.

The dust shall gather on it,
  I will not read it more:
Give me your hand — what was it
  We were talking of before?

I know not why — but tell me
  Of something gay and bright,
It is strange — my heart is heavy,
  And my eyes are dim to-night.

BE STRONG.

BE strong to *hope*, O Heart!
  Though day is bright,
The stars can only shine
  In the dark night,
Be strong, O Heart of mine,
  Look toward the light!

Be strong to *bear*, O Heart!
  Nothing is vain;
Strive not, for life is care,
  And God sends pain;
Heaven is above, and there
  Rest will remain!

Be strong to *love*, O Heart!
  Love knows not wrong;
Didst thou love — creatures even,
  Life were not long;
Didst thou love God in Heaven
  Thou wouldst be strong!

TREASURES.

LET me count my treasures,
All my soul holds dear,
Given me by dark spirits
Whom I used to fear.

Through long days of anguish,
And sad nights, did Pain
Forge my shield, Endurance,
Bright and free from stain.

Doubt, in misty caverns,
Mid dark horrors sought,
Till my peerless jewel,
Faith, to me she brought.

Sorrow, that I wearied
Should remain so long,
Wreathed my starry glory,
The bright Crown of Song.

Strife, that racked my spirit
Without hope or rest,
Left the blooming flower,
Patience on my breast.

Suffering, that I dreaded,
Ignorant of her charms,
Laid the fair child, Pity,
Smiling, in my arms.

So I count my treasures,
  Stored in days long past. —
And I thank the givers,
  Whom I know at last.

A DOUBTING HEART.

I.

WHERE are the swallows fled?
  Frozen and dead,
Perchance upon some bleak and stormy shore,
  O doubting heart!
  Far over purple seas,
  They wait in sunny ease,
  The balmy southern breeze,
To bring them to their northern homes once more.

II.

Why must the flowers die?
  Prisoned they lie
In the cold tomb, heedless of tears or rain.
  O doubting heart!
  They only sleep below
  The soft white ermine snow,
  While winter winds shall blow,
To breathe and smile upon you soon again.

III.

The sun has hid its rays
These many days;
Will dreary hours never leave the earth?
O doubting heart!
The stormy clouds on high
Veil the same sunny sky
That soon (for spring is nigh)
Shall wake the summer into golden mirth.

IV.

Fair hope is dead, and light
Is quenched in night,
What sound can break the silence of despair?
O doubting heart!
Thy sky is overcast,
Yet stars shall rise at last,
Brighter for darkness past,
And angels' silver voices stir the air.

NOW.

RISE! for the day is passing,
And you lie dreaming on;
The others have buckled their armor,
And forth to the fight are gone:
A place in the ranks awaits you,
Each man has some part to play;
The Past and the Future are nothing,
In the face of the stern To-day.

Rise from your dreams of the Future, —
  Of gaining some hard-fought field;
Of storming some airy fortress,
  Or bidding some giant yield;
Your Future has deeds of glory,
  Of honor (God grant it may!)
But your arm will never be stronger,
  Or the need so great as To-day.

Rise! if the Past detains you,
  Her sunshine and storms forget;
No chains so unworthy to hold you
  As those of a vain regret;
Sad or bright she is lifeless ever;
  Cast her phantom arms away,
Nor look back, save to learn the lesson
  Of a nobler strife To-day.

Rise! for the day is passing;
  The sound that you scarcely hear
Is the enemy marching to battle;
  Arise! for the foe is here!
Stay not to sharpen your weapons,
  Or the hour will strike at last,
When, from dreams of a coming battle,
  You may wake to find it past.

OUR DEAD.

NOTHING is our own: we hold our pleasures
Just a little while, ere they are fled;
One by one life robs us of our treasures;
Nothing is our own except our Dead.

They are ours, and hold in faithful keeping,
Safe forever all they took away.
Cruel life can never stir that sleeping,
Cruel time can never seize that prey.

How the Children leave us: and no traces
Linger of that smiling angel band;
Gone, forever gone; and in their places
Weary men and anxious women stand.

Yet we have some little ones, still ours;
They have kept the baby smile we know,
Which we kissed one day, and hid with flowers,
On their dead white faces, long ago.

When our Joy is lost — and life will take it —
Then no memory of the past remains;
Save with some strange, cruel sting, to make it
Bitterness beyond all present pains.

Death, more tender-hearted, leaves to sorrow
Still the radiant shadow, fond regret:
We shall find, in some far, bright to-morrow,
Joy that he has taken, living yet.

Is Love ours, and do we dream we know it,
Bound with all our heart-strings, all our own?
Any cold and cruel dawn may show it,
Shattered, desecrated, overthrown.

Only the dead Hearts forsake us never;
Death's last kiss has been the mystic sign
Consecrating Love our own forever,
Crowning it eternal and divine.

THE PILGRIMS.

THE way is long and dreary,
The path is bleak and bare;
Our feet are worn and weary,
But we will not despair.
More heavy was Thy burthen,
More desolate Thy way: —
O Lamb of God who takest
The sin of the world away,
Have mercy on us.

Our hearts are faint with sorrow,
Heavy and hard to bear;
For we dread the bitter morrow,
But we will not despair;
Thou knowest all our anguish,
And Thou wilt bid it cease, —
O Lamb of God who takest
The sin of the world away,
Give us Thy Peace!

A CHANT.

I.

WHO is the Angel that cometh?
Life!
Let us not question what he brings,
Peace or Strife;
Under the shade of his mighty wings,
One by one
Are his secrets told;
One by one,
Lit by the rays of each morning sun,
Shall a new flower its petals unfold,
With the mystery hid in its heart of gold.
We will arise and go forth to greet him,
Singly, gladly, with one accord:—
"Blessed is he that cometh
In the name of the Lord!"

II.

Who is the Angel that cometh?
Joy!
Look at his glittering rainbow wings,—
No alloy
Lies in the radiant gifts he brings;
Tender and sweet,
He is come to-day,
Tender and sweet:
While chains of love on his silver feet

Will hold him in lingering fond delay.
But greet him quickly, he will not stay,
Soon he will leave us; but though for others
All his brightest treasures are stored, —
"Blessed is he that cometh
In the name of the Lord!"

III.

Who is the Angel that cometh?
Pain!
Let us arise and go forth to greet him;
Not in vain
Is the summons come for us to meet him;
He will stay,
And darken our sun;
He will stay
A desolate night, a weary day.
Since in that shadow our work is done,
And in that shadow our crowns are won,
Let us say still, while his bitter chalice
Slowly into our hearts is poured, —
"Blessed is he that cometh
In the name of the Lord!"

IV.

Who is the Angel that cometh?
Death!
But do not shudder and do not fear;
Hold your breath,

For a kingly presence is drawing near.
Cold and bright
Is his flashing steel,
Cold and bright
The smile that comes like a starry light,
To calm the terror and grief we feel;
He comes to help and to save and heal:
Then let us, baring our hearts and kneeling,
Sing, while we wait this Angel's sword, —
"Blessed is he that cometh
In the name of the Lord!"

INCOMPLETENESS.

NOTHING resting in its own completeness
Can have worth or beauty; but alone
Because it leads and tends to farther sweetness,
Fuller, higher, deeper than its own.

Spring's real glory dwells not in the meaning,
Gracious though it be, of her blue hours;
But is hidden in her tender leaning
To the Summer's richer wealth of flowers.

Dawn is fair, because the mists fade slowly
Into Day, which floods the world with light;
Twilight's mystery is so sweet and holy
Just because it ends in starry Night.

Childhood's smiles unconscious graces borrow
From Strife, that in a far-off future lies;
And angel glances (veiled now by Life's sorrow)
Draw our hearts to some beloved eyes.

Life is only bright when it proceedeth
Towards a truer, deeper Life above;
Human Love is sweetest when it leadeth
To a more divine and perfect Love.

Learn the mystery of Progression duly;
Do not call each glorious change, Decay;
But know we only hold our treasures truly,
When it seems as if they passed away.

Nor dare to blame God's gifts for incompleteness;
In that want their beauty lies; they roll
Towards some infinite depth of love and sweetness,
Bearing onward man's reluctant soul.

SOWING AND REAPING.

SOW with a generous hand;
  Pause not for toil or pain;
Weary not through the heat of summer,
  Weary not through the cold spring rain;
But wait till the autumn comes
  For the sheaves of golden grain.

Scatter the seed, and fear not,
  A table will be spread;
What matter if you are too weary
  To eat your hard-earned bread:
Sow, while the earth is broken,
  For the hungry must be fed.

Sow; — while the seeds are lying
  In the warm earth's bosom deep,
And your warm tears fall upon it, —
  They will stir in their quiet sleep;
And the green blades rise the quicker,
  Perchance, for the tears you weep.

Then sow; — for the hours are fleeting,
  And the seed must fall to-day;
And care not what hands shall reap it,
  Or if you shall have passed away
Before the waving corn-fields
  Shall gladden the sunny day.

Sow; and look onward, upward,
  Where the starry light appears, —
Where, in spite of the coward's doubting,
  Or your own heart's trembling fears,
You shall reap in joy the harvest
  You have sown to-day in tears.

LET thy gold be cast in the furnace.
. . . . . .
For gold must be tried by fire,
  As a heart must be tried by pain!

FISHERS OF MEN.

THE boats are out, and the storm is high;
We kneel on the shore and pray:
The Star of the Sea shines still in the sky,
And God is our help and stay.

The fishers are weak, and the tide is strong,
And their boat seems slight and frail;
But St. Peter has steered it for them so long,
It would weather a rougher gale.

St. John the Belovèd sails with them too,
And his loving words they hear;
So with tender trust the boat's brave crew
Neither doubt, or pause, or fear.

He who sent them fishing is with them still,
And He bids them cast their net;
And He has the power their boat to fill
So we know He will do it yet.

They have cast their nets again and again,
And now call to us on shore;
If our feeble prayers seem only in vain,
We will pray and pray the more.

Though the storm is loud, and our voice is drowned
By the roar of the wind and sea,
We know that more terrible tempests found
Their Ruler, O Lord, in Thee!

TRUST AND REST.

FRET not, poor soul: while doubt and fear
Disturb thy breast,
The pitying angels, who can see
How vain thy wild regret must be,
Say, Trust and Rest.

Plan not, nor scheme, — but calmly wait;
His choice is best.
While blind and erring is thy sight,
His wisdom sees and judges right,
So Trust and Rest.

What dost thou fear? His wisdom reigns
Supreme confessed;
His power is infinite: His love
Thy deepest, fondest dreams above: —
So Trust and Rest.

OUR TITLES.

ARE we not Nobles? we who trace
Our pedigree so high
That God for us and for our race
Created Earth and Sky,
And Light and Air and Time and Space,
To serve us and then die.

Are we not Princes? we who stand
  As heirs beside the Throne:
We who can call the promised Land
  Our Heritage, our own;
And answer to no less command
  Than God's, and His alone.

Are we not Kings? both night and day,
  From early until late,
About our bed, about our way,
  A guard of Angels wait;
And so we watch and work and pray
  In more than royal state.

Are we not holy? Do not start:
  It is God's sacred will
To call us Temples set apart
  His Holy Ghost may fill.

. . . . . .

Are we not more? Our Life shall be
  Immortal and divine.

. . . . .

O God, that we can dare to fail,

. . . . . .

O God, that we can ever trail
  Such banners in the dust,
Can let such starry honors pale,
  And such a Blazon rust!

Shall we upon such Titles bring
  The taint of sin and shame?
Shall we, the children of the King
  Who hold so grand a claim,
Tarnish by any meaner thing
  The glory of our name?

A CHAPLET OF FLOWERS.

DEAR, set the casement open,
  The evening breezes blow
Sweet perfumes from the flowers
  I cannot see below.

I can but catch the waving
  Of chestnut boughs that pass,
Their shadow must have covered
  The sun-dial on the grass.

So go and bring the flowers
  I love best to my room,
My failing strength no longer
  Can bear me where they bloom.

You know I used to love them,
  But ah! they come too late, —
For see, my hands are trembling
  Beneath their dewy weight.

So I will watch you weaving
  A chaplet for me, dear,
Of all my favorite flowers,
  As I could do last year.

First, take those crimson roses, —
  How red their petals glow!
Red as the blood of Jesus,
  Which heals our sin and woe.

See in each heart of crimson
  A deeper crimson shine:
So in the foldings of our hearts
  Should glow a love divine.

Next place those tender violets,
  Look how they still regret
The cell where they were hidden, —
  The tears are on them yet.

How many souls — His loved ones —
  Dwell lonely and apart,
Hiding from all but One above
  The fragrance of their heart.

Then take that virgin lily,
  How holily she stands!
You know the gentle angels
  Bear lilies in their hands.

Yet crowned with purer radiance
  A deeper love they claim,
Because their queen-like whiteness
  Is linked with Mary's name.

And now this spray of ivy:
  You know its gradual clasp
Uproots strong trees, and towers
  Fall crumbling in its grasp.

So God's dear grace around us
  With secret patience clings,
And slow, sure power, that loosens
  Strong holds on human things.

Then heliotrope, that turneth
  Towards her lord the sun, —
Would that our thoughts as fondly
  Sought our belovèd One.

Nay, if that branch be fading,
  Cast not one blossom by,
Its little task is ended
  And it does well to die.

And let some field flowers even
  Be wreathed among the rest,
I think the infant Jesus
  Would love such ones the best.

These flowers are all too brilliant,
  So place calm heart's-ease there,
God's last and sacred treasure
  For all who wait and bear.

Then lemon-leaves, whose sweetness
  Grows sweeter than before
When bruised, and crushed, and broken,
  —Hearts need that lesson more.

Yet stay, — one crowning glory,
  All His, and yet all ours:
The dearest, tenderest thought of all
  Is still the Passion-flower's.

So take it now, — nay, heed not
  My tears that on it fall;
I thank Him for the flowers,
  As I can do for all.

IF THOU COULDST KNOW.

I.

I THINK if thou couldst know,
  O soul that will complain,
What lies concealed below
  Our burden and our pain;
How just our anguish brings
Nearer those longed-for things
We seek for now in vain, —
I think thou wouldst rejoice, and not complain.

II.

I think if thou couldst see,
With thy dim mortal sight,
How meanings, dark to thee,
Are shadows hiding light;
Truth's efforts crossed and vexed,
Life's purpose all perplexed, —
If thou couldst see them right,
I think that they would seem all clear, and wise, and bright.

WORDS.

WORDS are lighter than the cloud-foam
Of the restless ocean spray;
Vainer than the trembling shadow
That the next hour steals away.
By the fall of summer rain-drops
Is the air as deeply stirred;
And the rose-leaf that we tread on
Will outlive a word.

Yet, on the dull silence breaking
With a lightning flash, a Word,
Bearing endless desolation
On its blighting wings, I heard:
Earth can forge no keener weapon,
Dealing surer death and pain,
And the cruel echo answered
Through long years again.

I have known one word hang starlike
  O'er a dreary waste of years,
And it only shone the brighter
  Looked at through a mist of tears;
While a weary wanderer gathered
  Hope and heart on Life's dark way,
By its faithful promise, shining
    Clearer day by day.

I have known a spirit, calmer
  Than the calmest lake, and clear
As the heavens that gazed upon it,
  With no wave of hope or fear;
But a storm had swept across it,
  And its deepest depths were stirred,
(Never, never more to slumber,)
    Only by a word.

I have known a word more gentle
  Than the breath of summer air;
In a listening heart it nestled,
  And it lived forever there.
Not the beating of its prison
  Stirred it ever, night or day;
Only with the heart's last throbbing
    Could it fade away.

Words are mighty, words are living:
  Serpents with their venomous stings,
Or bright angels, crowding round us,
  With heaven's light upon their wings:

Every word has its own spirit,
  True or false, that never dies;
Every word man's lips have uttered
    Echoes in God's skies.

THE OLD YEAR'S BLESSING.

I AM fading from you,
  But one draweth near,
Called the Angel-guardian
  Of the coming year.

If my gifts and graces
  Coldly you forget,
Let the New Year's Angel
  Bless and crown them yet.

For we work together;
  He and I are one:
Let him end and perfect
  All I leave undone.

I brought Good Desires,
  Though as yet but seeds;
Let the New Year make them
  Blossom into Deeds.

I brought Joy to brighten
  Many happy days;
Let the New Year's Angel
  Turn it into Praise.

If I gave you Sickness,
  If I brought you Care,
Let him make you Patience,
  And the other Prayer.

Where I brought you Sorrow,
  Through his care, at length,
It may rise triumphant
  Into future Strength.

If I brought you Plenty,
  And wealth's bounteous charms,
Shall not the New Angel
  Turn them into Alms?

I gave Health and Leisure,
  Skill to dream and plan;
Let him make them nobler;—
  Work for God and Man.

If I broke your Idols,
  Showed you they were dust,
Let him turn the Knowledge
  Into heavenly Trust.

If I brought Temptation,
  Let sin die away
Into boundless Pity
  For all hearts that stray.

If your list of Errors
  Dark and long appears,
Let this new-born Monarch
  Melt them into tears.

May you hold this Angel
  Dearer than the last, —
So I bless his Future,
  While he crowns my Past.

STRIVE, WAIT, AND PRAY.

STRIVE; yet I do not promise
  The prize you dream of to-day
Will not fade when you think to grasp it,
  And melt in your hand away;
But another and holier treasure,
  You would now perchance disdain,
Will come when your toil is over,
  And pay you for all your pain.

Wait; yet I do not tell you
  The hour you long for now
Will not come with its radiance vanished,
  And a shadow upon its brow;
Yet far through the misty future,
  With a crown of starry light,
An hour of joy you know not,
  Is winging her silent flight.

Pray, though the gift you ask for
  May never comfort your fears,
May never repay your pleading,
  Yet pray, and with hopeful tears;
An answer, not that you long for,
  But diviner, will come one day;
Your eyes are too dim to see it,
  Yet strive, and wait, and pray.

PER PACEM AD LUCEM.

I DO not ask, O Lord, that life may be
  A pleasant road;
I do not ask that Thou wouldst take from me
  Aught of its load;

I do not ask that flowers should always spring
  Beneath my feet;
I know too well the poison and the sting
  Of things too sweet.

For one thing only, Lord, dear Lord, I plead,
  Lead me aright —
Though strength should falter, and though heart should
    bleed —
  Through Peace to Light.

I do not ask, O Lord, that Thou shouldst shed
  Full radiance here;
Give but a ray of peace, that I may tread
  Without a fear.

I do not ask my cross to understand,
My way to see;
Better in darkness just to feel Thy hand
And follow Thee.

Joy is like restless day: but peace divine
Like quiet night:
Lead me, O Lord, — till perfect Day shall shine,
Through Peace to Light.

OUR DAILY BREAD.

GIVE us our daily Bread,
O God, the bread of strength!
For we have learnt to know
How weak we are at length.
As children we are weak,
As children must be fed; —
Give us Thy Grace, O Lord,
To be our daily Bread.

Give us our daily Bread, —
The bitter bread of grief,
We sought earth's poisoned feasts
For pleasure and relief;
We sought her deadly fruits,
But now, O God, instead,
We ask Thy healing grief
To be our daily Bread.

Give us our daily Bread
  To cheer our fainting soul;
The feast of comfort, Lord,
  And peace to make us whole:
For we are sick of tears,
  The useless tears we shed;—
Now give us comfort, Lord,
  To be our daily Bread.

Give us our daily Bread,
  The Bread of Angels, Lord,
By us, so many times,
  Broken, betrayed, adored:
His Body and His Blood;—
  The feast that Jesus spread:
Give Him — our life, our all —
  To be our daily Bread!

CHRISTINA G. ROSSETTI.

All creatures sing around us, and we sing.

. . . . . .

God makes our service love, and makes our wage
Love: so we wend on patient pilgrimage.

ANOTHER DAY.

IT seems an easy thing
Mayhap one day to sing,
Yet the next day
We cannot sing or say.

Keep silence with good heart,
While silence fits our part:
Another day
We shall both sing and say.

Keep silence, counting time
To strike in at the chime;
Prepare to sound: —
Our part is coming round.

Cannot we sing or say?
In silence let us pray,
And meditate
Our love-song while we wait.

OUR HEAVEN.

OUR Heaven must be within ourselves,
Our Home and Heaven the work of faith
All through this race of life which shelves
Downward to death.

So faith shall build the boundary wall
And hope shall paint the secret bower,
That both may show magnifical
With gem and flower.

While over all a dome must spread,
And love shall be that dome above;
And deep foundations must be laid,
And these are love.

SOONER OR LATER.

SOONER or later; yet at last
The Jordan must be past;

It may be he will overflow
His banks the day we go;

It may be that his cloven deep
Will stand up on a heap.

Sooner or later; yet one day
We all must pass that way;

Each man, each woman, humbled pale,
Pass veiled within the veil;

Child, parent, bride, companion,
Alone, alone, alone.

For none a ransom can be paid,
A suretyship be made.

I, bent by mine own burden, must
Enter my house of dust;

I, rated to the full amount,
Must render mine own account.

When earth and sea shall empty all
Their graves of great and small;

When earth wrapped in a fiery flood
Shall no more hide her blood;

When mysteries shall be revealed;
All secrets be unsealed;

When things of might, when things of shame
Shall find at last a name

Pealed for a hissing and a curse
Throughout the universe:

Then Awful Judge, most Awful God,
Then cause to bud Thy rod,

To bloom with blossoms, and to give
Almonds: yea, bid us live.

I plead Thyself with Thee, I plead
Thee in our utter need:

Jesus, most Merciful of Men,
Show mercy on us then;

Lord God of Mercy and of men,
Show mercy on us then.

THOU Who hast borne all burdens, bear our load,
Bear Thou our load whatever it may be.
Our guilt, our shame, our helpless misery,
Bear Thou who only canst, O God, my God.

THE POWER OF LOVE.

HOW can one man, how can all men,
How can we be like St. Paul,
Like St. John, or like St. Peter,
Like the least of all
Blessed Saints? for we are small.

Love can make us like St. Peter,
Love can make us like St. Paul,
Love can make us like the blessed
Bosom friend of all,
Great St. John, — though we are small.

Love which clings and trusts and worships,
Love which rises from a fall,
Love which teaches glad obedience
Labors most of all,
Love makes great the great and small.

A LIFE'S PARALLELS.

NEVER on this side of the grave again,
On this side of the river,
On this side of the garner of the grain,
Never, —

Ever while time flows on and on and on,
That narrow noiseless river,
Ever while corn bows heavy-headed, wan,
Ever, —

Never despairing, often fainting, ruing,
But looking back, ah never!
Faint yet pursuing, faint yet still pursuing
Ever.

THE WEARY.

THROUGH burden and heat of the day
How weary the hands and the feet,
That labor with scarcely a stay,
Through burden and heat!

Tired toiler whose sleep shall be sweet,
Kneel down, it will rest thee to pray:
Then forward, for daylight is fleet.

Cool shadows grow lengthening and gray.
Cool twilight will soon be complete: —
What matter this wearisome way
Through burden and heat?

OUR DEAD.

WHO would wish back the Saints upon our rough,
Wearisome road?
Wish back a breathless soul
Just at the goal?
My soul, praise God
For all dear souls which have enough.

I would not fetch one back to hope with me
A hope deferred,
To taste the cup that slips
From thirsting lips: —
Hath he not heard
And seen what was to see and hear.

How could I stand to answer the rebuke,
If one should say:
"O friend of little faith,
Good was my death,
And good my day
Of rest, and good the sleep I took"?

ONE step more, and the race is ended,
One word more, and the lesson 's done,
One toil more, and a long rest follows
At set of sun.

MAIDEN MAY.

MAIDEN MAY sat in her bower,
In her blush-rose bower in flower,
Sweet of scent;
Sat and dreamed away an hour,
Half content, half uncontent.

"Why should rose blossoms be born,
Tender blossoms, on a thorn
Though so sweet?
Never a thorn besets the corn
Scentless in its strength complete.

"Why are roses all so frail,
At the mercy of the gale,
Of a breath?
Yet so sweet and perfect pale,
Still so sweet in life and death."

Maiden May sat in her bower,
In her blush-rose bower in flower,
Where a linnet
Made one bristling branch the tower
For her nest and young ones in it.

"Gay and clear the linnet trills;
Yet the skylark only, thrills
Heaven and earth
When he breasts the height, and fills
Height and depth with song and mirth.

"Nightingales which yield to night,
Solitary strange delight,
Reign alone:
But the lark for all his height
Fills no solitary throne.

"While he sings, a hundred sing;
Wing their flight below his wing
Yet in flight;
Each a lovely joyful thing
To the measure of its delight.

"Why then should a lark be reckoned
One alone, without a second
Near his throne?
He in skyward flight unslackened,
In his music, not alone."

Maiden May sat in her bower;
Her own face was like a flower
Of the prime,
Half in sunshine, half in shower,
In the year's most tender time.

Her own thoughts in silent song
Musically flowed along,
Wise, unwise,
Wistful, wondering, weak or strong;
As brook shallows sink or rise.

Other thoughts another day,
Maiden May, will surge and sway
Round your heart;
Wake, and plead, and turn at bay,
Wisdom part, and folly part.

Time not far remote will borrow
Other joys, another sorrow,
All for you:
Not to-day, and yet to-morrow
Reasoning false and reasoning true.

Wherefore greatest? Wherefore least?
Hearts that starve and hearts that feast?
You and I?
Stammering Oracles have ceased,
And the whole earth stands at "Why?"

Underneath all things that be
Lies an unsolved mystery:
Over all
Spreads a veil impenetrably,
Spreads a dense unlifted pall.

Mystery of mysteries;
This creation hears and sees
High and low —
Vanity of vanities:
This we test and *this* we know.

Maiden May, the days of flowering
Nurse you now in sweet embowering,
Sunny days:
Bright with rainbows all the showering,
Bright with blossoms all the ways.

Close the inlet of your bower,
Close it close with thorn and flower,
Maiden May:
Lengthen out the shortening hour, —
Morrows are not as to-day.

Stay to-day which wanes too soon,
Stay the sun and stay the moon,
Stay your youth;
Bask you in the actual noon,
Rest you in the present truth.

Let to-day suffice to-day:
For itself to-morrow may
Fetch its loss;
Aim and stumble, say its say,
Watch and pray and bear its cross.

PLEASURE.

I.

TREASURE plies a feather,
Pleasure spreadeth wings,
Taking flight together, —
Ah! my cherished things.

II.

Fly away, poor pleasure,
  That art so brief a thing:
Fly away, poor treasure,
  That hast so swift a wing.

III.

Pleasure, to be pleasure,
  Must come without a wing;
Treasure, to be treasure,
  Must be a stable thing.

IV.

Treasure without feather,
  Pleasure without wings,
Elsewhere dwell together
  And are heavenly things.

LOVE UNDERSTANDS.

LOVE understands the mystery, whereof
  We can but spell a surface history:
Love knows, remembers: let us trust in Love:
  Love understands the mystery.

Love weighs the event, the long pre-history,
Measures the depth beneath, the height above,
  The mystery, with the ante-mystery.

To love and to be grieved befits a dove
  Silently telling her bead-history;
Trust all to Love, be patient and approve:
  Love understands the mystery.

SOW AND REAP.

HOPE afresh, for hope shall not be vain:
  Start afresh along the exceedingly steep
  Road to glory, long and rough and plain.

Sow and reap: for while these moments creep,
  Time and earth and life are on the wane.
Now, in tears; to-morrow, laugh and reap
  Once again.

WHO scatters tares shall reap no wheat
But go hungry while others eat.

Who sows the wind shall not reap grain,
The sown wind whirleth back again.

WE sow to reap,
Have patience, wait, betake ourselves to prayer:
Deep answereth deep.

ROSES.

I.

WHERE shall I find a white rose blowing? —
Out in the garden where all sweets be. —
But out in my garden the snow was snowing
And never a white rose opened for me.
Nought but snow and a wind were blowing
And snowing.

II.

Where shall I find a blush rose blushing? —
On the garden wall or the garden bed. —
But out in my garden the rain was rushing
And never a blush rose raised its head.
Nothing glowing, flushing or blushing:
Rain rushing.

III.

Where shall I find a red rose budding? —
Out in the garden where all things grow. —
But out in my garden a flood was flooding,
And never a red rose begun to blow.
Out in a flooding what should be budding?
All flooding!

IV.

Now is winter and now is sorrow,
  No roses but only thorns to-day:
Thorns will put on roses to-morrow,
  Winter and sorrow scudding away.
No more winter and no more sorrow
  To-morrow.

THROUGH coldness and through keenness,
  Dear hearts, take comfort so;
Somewhere or other doubtless,
  These make the blackthorn blow.

HOMEWARD BOUND.

HOME by different ways. Yet all
  Homeward bound through prayer and praise,
Young with old and great with small,
  Home by different ways.

  Many nights and many days
Wind must blow and rain must fall,
  Quake the quicksand, shift the haze.

Life hath called and death will call
  Saints who praying kneel at gaze,
Ford the flood or leap the wall,
  Home by different ways.

AN "IMMURATA" SISTER.

LIFE flows down to death; we cannot bind
That current that it should not flee;
Life flows down to death, as rivers find
The inevitable sea.

Men work and think, but women feel;
And so (for I 'm a woman, I)
And so I should be glad to die
And cease from impotence of zeal,
And cease from hope, and cease from dread,
And cease from yearnings without gain,
And cease from all this world of pain,
And be at peace among the dead.

Hearts that die, by death renew their youth,
Lightened of this life that doubts and dies,
Silent and contented, while the Truth
Unveiled makes them wise.

Why should I seek and never find
That something which I have not had?
Fair and unutterably sad
The world hath sought time out of mind;
The world hath sought and I have sought, —
Ah, empty world and empty I!
For we have spent our strength for nought,
And soon it will be time to die.

Sparks fly upward toward their fount of fire,
Kindling, flashing, hovering:
Kindle, flash, my soul; mount higher and higher,
Thou whole burnt-offering!

A TIME to suffer, and a time to do,
And then the time is past.
Heaven's chimes are slow, but sure to strike at last.

"LIFT up your hearts" — "We lift them up" — ah me!
I cannot, Lord, lift up my heart to Thee;
Stoop, lift it up, that where Thou art I too may be.

HEARTSEASE.

HEARTSEASE I found, where Love-lies-bleeding
Empurpled all the ground;
Whatever flowers I missed unheeding,
Heartsease I found.

Yet still my garden mound
Stood sore in need of watering, weeding,
And binding things unbound.

Ah, when shades fell to light succeeding,
I scarcely dared look round:
"Love-lies-bleeding" was all my pleading,
Heartsease I found.

WHERE LOVE IS.

WHERE love is, there comes sorrow
To-day or else to-morrow;
Endure the mood,
Love only means our good.

Where love is, there comes pleasure,
With or withouten measure
Early or late
Cheering the sorriest state.

Where love is, all perfection
Is stored for heart's delection;
For where love is
Dwells every sort of bliss.

Who would not choose a sorrow
Love's self will cheer to-morrow?
One day of sorrow
Then such a long to-morrow!

LOVE recognizes love's own cry,
And stoops to take love's offering.

TEMPUS FUGIT.

LOVELY Spring,
A brief sweet thing,
Is swift on the wing;
Gracious Summer,

A slow sweet comer,
Hastens past;
Autumn while sweet
Is all incomplete
With a moaning blast, —
Nothing can last,
Can be cleaved unto;
Can be dwelt upon;
It is hurried through,
It is come and gone,
Undone it cannot be done,
It is ever to do,
Ever old, ever new,
Ever waxing old
And lapsing to Winter cold.

TO-MORROW BLOTS OUT SORROW.

PARTING after parting,
Sore loss and gnawing pain;
Meeting grows half a sorrow,
Because of parting again.
When shall the day break
That these things shall not be?
When shall the new earth be ours
Without a sea,
And time that is not time,
But eternity?

SAINTS are like roses when they flush rarest,
Saints are like lilies when they bloom fairest,

Saints are like violets sweetest of their kind,
    Bear in mind
This to-day. Then to-morrow: —
All like roses rarer than the rarest,
All like lilies fairer than the fairest,
All like violets sweeter than we know;
    Be it so,
To-morrow blots out sorrow.

DE PROFUNDIS.

OH why is heaven built so far,
    Oh why is earth set so remote?
I cannot reach the nearest star
        That hangs afloat.

I would not care to reach the moon,
  One round monotonous of change;
Yet even she repeats her tune
        Beyond my range.

I never watch the scattered fire
  Of stars, or sun's far-trailing train,
But all my heart is one desire,
        And all in vain:

For I am bound with fleshly bands,
  Joy, beauty, lie beyond my scope;
I strain my heart, I stretch my hands,
        And catch at hope.

DOUBLE.

SORROW hath a double voice,
Sharp to-day, but sweet to-morrow:
Wait in patience, hope, rejoice,
Tried friends of sorrow.

Pleasure hath a double taste,
Sweet to-day, but sharp to-morrow:
Friends of pleasure, rise in haste,
Make friends with sorrow.

Pleasure set aside to-day
Comes again to rule to-morrow:
Welcomed sorrow will not stay,
Farewell to sorrow!

To meet, worth living for;
Worth dying for, to meet;
To meet, worth parting for,
Bitter forgot in sweet:
To meet, worth parting before
Never to part more.

THE VOICE OF THE WIND.

THERE'S no replying
To the Wind's sighing,
Telling, foretelling,
Dying, undying,

Dwindling and swelling,
Complaining, droning,
Whistling and moaning,
Ever beginning,
Ending, repeating,
Hinting and dinning,
Lagging and fleeting —
We 've no replying
Living or dying
To the Wind's sighing.

What are you telling,
Variable Wind-tone ?
What would be teaching,
O sinking, swelling,
Desolate Wind-moan ?
Ever, for ever
Teaching and preaching,
Never, ah never
Making us wiser —
The earliest riser
Catches no meaning,
The last who hearkens
Garners no gleaning
Of wisdom's treasure,
While the world darkens : —
Living or dying,
In pain, in pleasure,
We 've no replying
To wordless flying
Wind's sighing.

FLOWERS.

YOUNG girls wear flowers,
  Young brides a flowery wreath,
But next we plant them
  In garden plots of death.
Whose lot is best:
The maiden's curtained rest,
  Or bride's whose hoped-for sweet
  May yet outstrip her feet?
Ah! what are such as these
To death's sufficing ease?
He sleeps indeed who sleeps in peace
  Where night and morning meet.

Dear are the blossoms,
  For bride's or maiden's head,
But dearer planted
  Around our blessed dead.
Those mind us of decay
And joys that fade away,
  These preach to us perfection,
  Long love, and resurrection.
We make our graveyards fair
For spirit-like birds of air,
For Angels may be finding there
  Lost Eden's own delection.

BRIEFNESS.

LIGHT is our sorrow for it ends to-morrow,
  Light is our death which cannot hold us fast;
So brief a sorrow can be scarcely sorrow,
  Or death be death so quickly past.

One night, no more, of pain that turns to pleasure,
  One night, no more, of weeping, weeping sore:
And then the heaped-up measure beyond measure,
  In quietness for evermore.

Our face is set like flint against our trouble,
  Yet many things there are which comfort us,
This bubble is a rainbow-colored bubble,
  This bubble-life tumultuous.

Our sails are set to cross the tossing river,
  Our face is set to reach Jerusalem:
We toil awhile, but then we rest forever,
  Sing with all Saints and rest with them.

THE LILY AND THE LAMB.

THY lilies drink the dew,
  Thy lambs the rill, and I will drink them too;
  For those in purity
And innocence are types, dear Lord, of Thee.
  The fragrant lily flower
Bows and fulfils Thy Will its lifelong hour;
  The lamb at rest and play
Fulfils Thy Will in gladness all the day;

They leave to-morrow's cares
Until the morrow, what it brings it bears.
And I, Lord, would be such;
Not high, or great, or anxious overmuch,
But pure and temperate,
Earnest to do Thy Will betimes and late,
Fragrant with love and praise
And innocence through all my appointed days;
Thy lily I would be
Spotless and sweet, Thy lamb to follow Thee.

PASSING AND GLASSING.

ALL things that pass
Are woman's looking-glass;
They show her how her bloom must fade,
And she herself be laid
With withered roses in the shade;
With withered roses and the fallen peach,
Unlovely, out of reach
Of summer joy that was.

All things that pass
Are woman's tiring-glass;
The faded lavender is sweet,
Sweet the dead violet
Culled and laid by and cared for yet;
The dried-up violets and dried lavender
Still sweet, may comfort her,
Nor need she cry Alas!

All things that pass
Are wisdom's looking-glass;
Being full of hope and fear, and still
Brimful of good or ill,
According to our work and will;
For there is nothing new beneath the sun;
Our doings have been done,
And that which shall be was.

GOLDEN GLORIES.

THE buttercup is like a golden cup,
The marigold is like a golden frill,
The daisy with a golden eye looks up,
And golden spreads the flag beside the rill,
And gay and golden nods the daffodil;
The gorsey common swells a golden sea,
The cowslip hangs a head of golden tips,
And golden drips the honey which the bee
Sucks from sweet hearts of flowers and stores and sips.

IF LOVE IS NOT.

I.

IF love is not worth loving, then life is not worth living,
Nor aught is worth remembering, but well forgot,
For store is not worth storing, and gifts are not worth giving,
If love is not.

II.

And idly cold is death-cold, and life-heat idly hot,
And vain is any offering, and vainer our receiving,
And vanity of vanities is all our lot.

III.

Better than life's heaving heart is death's heart unheaving,
Better than the opening leaves are the leaves that rot,
For there is nothing left worth achieving or retrieving,
If love is not.

LOVE'S LIGHT.

LOVE lights the sun, Love through the dark
Lights the moon's evanescent arc,
Lights up the star, lights up the spark.

O ye who taste that love is sweet,
Set waymarks for all doubtful feet
That stumble on in search of it.

Sing notes of love; that some who hear
Far off inert may lend an ear,
Rise up and wonder and draw near.

Lead life of love; that others who
Behold your life may kindle too
With love, and cast their lot with you.

YET A LITTLE WHILE.

I DREAMED and did not seek: to-day I seek
  Who can no longer dream;
But now am all behindhand, waxen weak,
  And dazed amid so many things that gleam,
    Yet are not what they seem.

I dreamed and did not work: to-day I work,
  Kept wide awake by care
And loss, and perils dimly guessed to lurk:
  I work and reap not, while my life goes bare
    And void in wintry air.

I hope indeed; but hope itself is fear
  Viewed on the sunny side;
I hope, and disregard the world that 's here,
  The prizes drawn, the sweet things that betide:
    I hope, and I abide.

SUMMER WILL COME.

A ROSE which spied one swallow
  Made haste to blush and blow:
"Others are sure to follow:"
Ah no, not so!
The wandering clouds still owe
A few fresh flakes of snow,
Chill fog must fill the hollow.

Before the bird-stream flow
In flood across the main
And winter's woe
End in glad summer come again.
Then thousand flowers may blossom by the shore,
But that Rose never more.

WAIT.

LIE still, my restive heart, lie still;
God's Word to thee saith, "Wait and bear."
The good which He appoints is good,
The good which He denies were ill;
Yea, subtle comfort is thy care,
Thy hurt a help not understood.
"Friend, go up higher," to one; to one,
"Friend, enter thou My joy," He saith:
To one, "Be faithful unto death."
For some a wilderness doth flower,
Or day's work in one hour is done, —
"But thou, couldst thou not watch one hour?"

SHOW PITY.

OF all the downfalls in the world
The flutter of an Autumn leaf
Grows grievous by suggesting grief;
Who thought, when Spring was first unfurled,
Of this? The wide world lay empearled:
Who thought of frost that nips the world?
Sigh on, my ditty.

Thus lurk a hundred subtle stings
To prick us in our daily walk:
An apple cankered on its stalk,
A robin snared for all his wings,
A voice that sang but never sings;
Yea, sight or sound or silence stings.
Kind Lord, show pity.

ONE BY THE CLOCK.

AFTER midnight, in the dark
The clock strikes one, —
New day has begun.
Look up and hark!
With singing heart forestall the carolling lark.

After midday, in the light
The clock strikes one, —
Day fall has begun.
Cast up, set right
The day's account against the on-coming night.

After noon and night, one day
For ever one
Ends not, once begun.
Whither away,
O brothers, and O sisters? Pause and pray.

GRIEF is not grievous to a soul that knows
Christ comes, — and listens for that hour to strike.

IN THE WILLOW SHADE.

I SAT beneath a willow tree,
  Where water falls and calls;
While fancies upon fancies solaced me,
  Some true, and some were false.

Who set their heart upon a hope
  That never comes to pass,
Droop in the end like fading heliotrope,
  The sun's wan looking-glass.

Who set their will upon a whim
  Clung to through good and ill,
Are wrecked alike whether they sink or swim,
  Or hit or miss their will.

All things are vain that wax and wane,
  For which we waste our breath;
Love only doth not wane and is not vain,
  Love only outlives death.

A singing lark rose toward the sky,
  Circling he sang amain;
He sang, a speck scarce visible sky-high,
  And then he sank again.

A second like a sunlit spark
  Flashed singing up his track;
But never overtook that foremost lark,
  And songless fluttered back.

A hovering melody of birds
  Haunted the air above;
They clearly sang contentment without words,
  And youth and joy and love.

O silvery weeping-willow tree
  With all leaves shivering,
Have you no purpose but to shadow me
  Beside this rippled spring?

On this first fleeting day of Spring,
  For Winter is gone by,
And every bird on every quivering wing
  Floats in a sunny sky;

On this first Summer-like soft day,
  While sunshine steeps the air
And every cloud has gat itself away,
  And birds sing everywhere.

Have you no purpose in the world
  But thus to shadow me
With all your tender drooping twigs unfurled,
  O weeping-willow tree?

With all your tremulous leaves outspread
  Betwixt me and the sun,
While here I loiter on a mossy bed
  With half my work undone;

My work undone, that should be done
  At once with all my might;
For after the long day and lingering sun
  Comes the unworking night.

This day is lapsing on its way,
  Is lapsing out of sight;
And after all the chances of the day
  Comes the resourceless night.

The weeping-willow shook its head
  And stretched its shadow long;
The west grew crimson, the sun smouldered red,
  The birds forbore a song.

Slow wind sighed through the willow leaves,
  The ripple made a moan,
The world drooped murmuring like a thing that grieves;
  And then I felt alone.

I rose to go, and felt the chill,
  And shivered as I went;
Yet shivering wondered, and I wonder still,
  What more that willow meant;

That silvery weeping-willow tree
  With all leaves shivering,
Which spent one long day overshadowing me,
  Beside a spring in Spring.

GOLDEN SILENCES.

THERE is silence that saith, "Ah me!"
There is silence that nothing saith;
One the silence of life forlorn,
One the silence of death;
One is, and the other shall be.

One we know and have known for long,
One we know not, but we shall know,
All we who have ever been born;
Even so, be it so, —
There is silence, despite a song.

Sowing day is a silent day,
Resting night is a silent night;
But who reaps the ripened corn
Shall shout in his delight,
While silences vanish away.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

WHY has Spring one syllable less
Than any its fellow season?
There may be some other reason,
And I 'm merely making a guess;
But surely it hoards such wealth
Of happiness, hope and health,

Sunshine and musical sound,
It may spare a foot from its name,
Yet all the same
Superabound.

Soft-named Summer,
Most welcome comer,
Brings almost everything
Over which we dream or sing
Or sigh;
But then Summer wends its way,
To-morrow, — to-day, —
Good-bye!
Autumn, — the slow name lingers,
While we likewise flag;
It silences many singers;
Its slow days drag,
Yet hasten at speed
To leave us in chilly need
For Winter to strip indeed.

In all-lack Winter,
Dull of sense and of sound,
We huddle and shiver
Beside our splinter
Of crackling pine,
Snow in sky and snow on ground.
Winter and cold
Can't last for ever!
To-day, to-morrow, the sun will shine;
When we are old,

But some still are young,
Singing the song
Which others have sung, —
Ringing the bells
Which others have rung, —
Even so !
We ourselves, who else ?
We ourselves long
Long ago.

SWEET the sorrow
Which ends to-morrow ;
Sharp though it be and sore,
It ends for evermore ;
Test of sorrow,
What ends to-morrow.

AN OCTOBER GARDEN.

IN my Autumn garden I was fain
To mourn among my scattered roses ;
Alas for that last rosebud which uncloses
To autumn's languid sun and rain,
When all the world is on the wane !
Which has not felt the sweet constraint of June,
Nor heard the nightingale in tune.

Broad-faced asters by my garden walk,
You are but coarse compared with roses ;
More choice, more dear that rosebud which uncloses

Faint-scented, pinched, upon its stalk,
That least and last which cold winds balk;
A rose it is though least and last of all,
A rose to me though at the fall.

JOY AND PAIN.

JOY is but sorrow,
While we know
It ends to-morrow: —
Even so!
Joy with lifted veil
Shows a face as pale
As the fair changing moon so fair and frail.

Pain is but pleasure,
If we know
It heaps up treasure: —
Even so!
Turn, transfigured Pain,
Sweetheart, turn again,
For fair art thou as moon-rise after rain.

UNTIL THE DAY BREAK.

WHEN will the day bring its pleasure?
When will the night bring its rest?
Reaper and gleaner and thresher
Peer toward the east and the west: —
The Sower He knoweth, and He knoweth best.

Meteors flash forth and expire,
  Northern lights kindle and pale;
These are the days of desire,
  Of eyes looking upward that fail;
  Vanishing as a finishing tale.

Bows down the crop in its glory
  Tenfold, fifty-fold, hundred-fold;
The millet is ripened and hoary,
  The wheat ears are ripened to gold:—
  Why keep us waiting in dimness and cold?

The Lord of the harvest, He knoweth
  Who knoweth the first and the last:
The Sower who patiently soweth,
  He scanneth the present and past:
  He saith, "What thou hast, what remaineth, hold fast."

Yet, Lord, o'er Thy toil-wearied reapers
  The storm-clouds hang muttering and frown:
On threshers and gleaners and reapers,
  O Lord of the harvest, look down;
  Oh for the harvest, the shout, and the crown!

"Not so," saith the Lord of the reapers,
  The Lord of the first and the last;
"O My toilers, My weary, My weepers,
  What ye have, what remaineth, hold fast,
  Hide in My heart till the vengeance be past.

A DAY OF DAYS.

I WISH I could remember that first day,
First hour, first moment of your meeting me;
If bright or dim the season, it might be
Summer or Winter for aught I can say;
So unrecorded did it slip away,
So blind was I to see and to foresee —
So dull to mark the budding of my tree
That would not blossom yet for many a May.
If only I could recollect it, such
A day of days! I let it come and go
As traceless as a thaw of bygone snow;
It seemed to mean so little, meant so much;
If only now I could recall that touch,
First touch of hand in hand — Did one but know!

CHRISTMAS EVE.

I.

CHRISTMAS hath a darkness
Brighter than the blazing noon,
Christmas hath a chillness
Warmer than the heat of June,
Christmas hath a beauty
Lovelier than the world can show,
For Christmas bringeth Jesus
Brought for us so low.

II.

Earth, strike up your music,
  Birds that sing and bells that ring;
Heaven hath answering music,
  For all Angels soon to sing;
Earth, put on your whitest
  Bridal robe of spotless snow,
For Christmas bringeth Jesus
  Brought for us so low.

CHRISTMAS DAY.

I.

A BABY is a harmless thing,
  And wins our heart with one accord,
And Flower of babies was their King
  Jesus Christ our Lord:
Lily of lilies He
Upon His Mother's knee;
Rose of roses, soon to be
Crowned with thorns on leafless tree.

II.

A lamb is innocent and mild
  And merry on the soft green sod,
And Jesus Christ the Undefiled,
  Is the Lamb of God:
Only spotless He
Upon His Mother's knee;
White and ruddy, soon to be
Sacrificed for you and me.

III.

Nay, lamb is not so sweet a word,
  Nor lily half so pure a name;
Another name our hearts hath stirred,
  Kindling them to flame:
"Jesus" certainly
Is music and melody;
Heart with heart in harmony
Carol we and worship we.

LOVE came down at Christmas,
  Love all lovely, Love Divine,
Love was born at Christmas,
  Star and Angel gave the sign.
Worship we the Godhead,
  Love Incarnate, Love Divine,—
Worship we our Jesus.

ASH WEDNESDAY.

MY God, my God, have mercy on my sin
  For it is great; and if I should begin
To tell it all, the day would be too small
  To tell it in.

My God, Thou wilt have mercy on my sin
For Thy Love's sake; yea, if I should begin
To tell this all, the day would be too small
  To tell it in.

GOOD FRIDAY.

LORD JESUS CHRIST grown faint upon the Cross,
A sorrow beyond sorrow in Thy look,
The unutterable craving for my soul,
Thy love of me sufficed
To load upon Thee and make good my loss
In face of darkened heaven and earth that shook: —
In face of earth and heaven, take Thou my whole
Heart, O Lord Jesus Christ.

EASTER EVEN.

THE tempest over and gone, the calm begun.
Lo, "it is finished," and the Strong Man sleeps;
All stars keep vigil watching for the sun,
The moon her vigil keeps.

A garden full of silence and of dew,
Beside a virgin cave and entrance stone:
Surely a garden full of Angels too,
Wondering, on watch alone.

They who cry "Holy, Holy, Holy," still
Veiling their faces round God's Throne above,
May well keep vigil on this heavenly hill
And cry their cry of love.

Adoring God in His new mystery
  Of Love more deep than hell, more strong than death:
Until the day break and the shadows flee,
  The Shaking and the Breath.

EASTER DAY.

WORDS cannot utter
  Christ His returning: —
Mankind, keep jubilee,
  Strip off your mourning,
Crown you with garlands,
  Set your lamps burning.

Speech is left speechless: —
  Set you to singing,
Fling your hearts open wide,
  Set your bells ringing;
Christ the Chief Reaper
  Comes, His sheaf bringing.

Earth wakes her song birds,
  Puts on her flowers,
Leads out her lambkins,
  Builds up her bowers:
This is man's spousal day,
  Christ's day and ours.

QUESTION AND ANSWER.

"DOES the road wind up-hill all the way?"
"Yes, to the very end!"
"Will the day's journey take the whole long day?"
"From morn to night, my friend!"

"But is there for the night a resting-place?"
"A roof for me when the dark hours begin!"
"May not the darkness hide it from my face?"
"You cannot miss that inn!"

"Shall I meet other wayfarers at night?"
"Those who have gone before!"
"Then must I knock, or call when just in sight?"
"They will not keep you standing at that door!"

"Shall I find comfort, travel-sore and weak?"
"Of labor you shall find the sum!"
"Will there be beds for me and all who seek?"
"Yea, beds for all who come!"

A CHORUS OF MANY VOICES.

We sing
Of love, whose blessed glow transcends the laws
Of time and change and mortal life and death.

TWO LOVERS.

TWO lovers by a moss-grown spring:
They leaned soft cheeks together there,
Mingled the dark and sunny hair,
And heard the wooing thrushes sing.
O budding time!
O love's blest prime!

Two wedded from the portal stept:
The bells made happy carollings,
The air was soft as fanning wings,
White petals on the pathway slept.
O pure-eyed bride!
O tender pride!

Two faces o'er a cradle bent:
Two hands above the head were locked;
These pressed each other while they rocked,
Those watched a life that love had sent.
O solemn hour!
O hidden power!

Two parents by the evening fire:
The red light fell about their knees
On heads that rose by slow degrees
Like buds upon the lily spire.
O patient life!
O tender strife!

The two still sat together there,
The red light shone about their knees;
But all the heads by slow degrees
Had gone and left that lonely pair.
O voyage fast!
O vanished past!

The red light shone upon the floor
And made the space between them wide:
They drew their chairs up side by side,
Their pale cheeks joined, and said, "Once more!"
O memories!
O past that is!

George Eliot.

PARTING.

THERE 'S no use in weeping,
Though we are condemned to part;
There 's such a thing as keeping
A remembrance in one's heart.

There 's such a thing as dwelling
On the thought ourselves have nursed,
And with scorn and courage telling
The world to do its worst.

We 'll not let its follies grieve us,
We 'll just take them as they come;
And then every day will leave us
A merry laugh for home.

When we 've left each friend and brother,
  When we 've parted wide and far,
We will think of one another,
  As even better than we are.

Every glorious sight above us,
  Every pleasant sight beneath,
We 'll connect with those that love us,
  Whom we truly love till death!

In the evening, when we 're sitting
  By the fire, perchance alone,
Then shall heart with warm heart meeting,
  Give responsive tone for tone.

We can burst the bonds which chain us,
  Which cold human hands have wrought,
And when none shall dare restrain us
  We can meet again, in thought.

So there 's no use in weeping,
  Bear a cheerful spirit still;
Never doubt that Fate is keeping
  Future good for present ill.

Charlotte Brontë.

OUR PATH.

THEIR source is on the mountains,
The streams of which we drink;
But we must tread the valleys,
If we would reach their brink.
Their source is on the mountains,
Higher than feet can go;
Yet human lips but touch them,
In the valleys, still and low.

Once, when the heavenly voices
Did call me on their track,
I wondered why some hindrance
Still drew my footsteps back;
Some feeble steps to succor,
Some childish feet to lead,
Some wandering lambs to gather,
Some hungered ones to feed.

Some call of lowly duty,
With low, resistless tone;
Some weight of others' burdens,
Some burden of my own;
But now, though heavenly voices
Still bid my spirit soar,
While treading lowly places,
I wonder thus, no more.

Their source is on the mountains,
  The streams of which we drink;
But only in the valleys
  Our lips can reach the brink.
Our hearts are on the mountains,
  Whither our feet shall go;
But our path is in the valley,
  Where the still waters flow.

Mrs. Charles.

ONWARD AND HEAVENWARD.

WOULD you be young again?
  So would not I;
One tear to mem'ry given,
  Onward I 'd hie.
Life's dark flood forded o'er,
All but at rest on shore, —
Say, would you plunge once more
  With home so nigh?

If you might, would you now
  Retrace your way?
Wander through stormy wilds,
  Faint and astray?
Night's gloomy watches spread,
Morning all beaming red,
Hope's smiles around us shed,
  Heavenward — away!

Where, then, are those dear ones,
Our joy and delight?
Dear, and more dear, though now
Hidden from sight.
Where they rejoice to be,
There is the land for me;
Fly time — fly speedily!
Come, life and light!

Lady Nairn.

THE SOWER.

IN the dim dawning sow thy seed,
And in the evening stay not thy hand,
What it will bring forth — wheat or weed —
Who can know. or who understand?
Few will heed,
Yet sow thy seed.

See the red sunrise before thee glows,
Though close behind thee night lingers still,
Flapping their fatal wings, come the black foes,
Following, following over the hill.
No repose;
Sow thou thy seed.

We, too, went sowing in glad sunrise;
Now it is twilight, sad shadows fall.
Where is the harvest? Why lift we our eyes?
What could we see here? But God seeth all.
Fast life flies;
Sow the good seed.

Though we may cast it with trembling hand,
Spirit half broken, heart-sick and faint,
His winds will scatter it over the land,
His rain will nourish and cleanse it from taint,
Sinner or saint,
Sow the good seed.

Dinah Muloch Craik.

LIFE.

LIFE! I know not what thou art,
But know that thou and I must part;
And when, or how, or where we met,
I own to me 's a secret yet.

Life! we have been long together,
Through pleasant and through cloudy weather.
'T is hard to part when friends are dear;
Perhaps 't will cost a sigh, a tear.
Then steal away; give little warning;
Choose thine own time;
Say not Good Night; but in some brighter clime
Bid me Good Morning!

Anna Letitia Barbauld.

SONG.

I LIKE not beauty's roseate brightness;
I like not beauty's sparkling eye:
Give me the cheek whose marble whiteness
Feeling's faint blush alone can dye;

Give me the pure and tranquil glance
Where no vain triumphs proudly dance,
Serene and blue as heaven's expanse: —
Thy cheeks, thine eyes, my Mary!

I like not lips forever smiling;
I like not speech forever gay:
Give me the softness more beguiling
Which gently veils wit's brilliant ray;
Give me the mellow voice that tells
What sweetness in the bosom dwells:
The sigh that oft that bosom swells: —
Thy voice, thy sigh, my Mary!

Miss Mitford.

THE SPRING.

THE Spring — she is a blessed thing!
She is the mother of the flowers;
She is the mate of birds and bees,
The partner of their revelries,
Our star of hope through wintry hours.

The many children, when they see
Her coming, by the budding thorn,
They leap upon the cottage floor,
They shout beside the cottage door,
And run to meet her night and morn.

They are soonest with her in the woods,
  Peeping, the wither'd leaves among,
To find the earliest fragrant thing
That dares from the cold earth to spring,
  Or catch the earliest wild-bird's song.

The little brooks run on in light,
  As if they had a chase of mirth;
The skies are blue, the air is balm;
Our very hearts have caught the charm
  That sheds a beauty over earth.

She comes with more than present good
  With joys to store for future years,
From which, in striving crowds apart,
The bow'd in spirit, bruised in heart,
  May glean up hopes with grateful tears.

Up — let us to the fields away,
  And breathe the fresh and balmy air;
The bird is building in the tree,
The flower has open'd to the bee,
  And health and love and peace are there.

Mary Howitt.

VESPERS.

WHEN I have said my quiet say,
When I have sung my little song
How sweet, methought, shall die the day
The valley and the hill along!
How sweet the summons, "Come away!"
That calls me from the busy throng.

I thought beside the water's flow
Awhile to lie beneath the leaves;
I thought in autumn's harvest glow
To rest my head upon the sheaves.
But lo! methinks the day is brief
And cloudy; flower, nor fruit, nor leaf,
I bring; and yet, accepted, free,
And blest, my Lord, I come to Thee.

What matter now for promise lost
Through blast of spring or summer rains?
What matter now for purpose crossed,
For broken hopes, and wasted pains?
What if the olive little yields?
What if the vine be blasted? Thine
The corn upon a thousand fields,
Upon a thousand hills the vine!

Thou lovest still the poor, — oh, blest
In poverty beloved to be!
Less lowly is my choice confessed, —
I love the rich in loving Thee.

My spirit bare before Thee stands;
I bring no gift, I ask no sign;
I come to Thee with empty hands,
The surer to be filled from Thine!

Dora Greenwell.

LOVING SERVICE.

I HEARD the wavelet kiss the shore, ere lost within the sea,
And the ripple of the silvery tide seemed as a psalm to me;
Contented with God's holy will, its feeble voice to raise,
To hymn His glory, and be lost, nor thirst for human praise.
Lord, make me, like the ocean's voice, obedient to Thy will,
Thy purpose work as faithfully, and at Thy word be still.

I marked the soft dew silently descend o'er plain and hill,
On each parched herb and drooping flower the heavenly cloud distil.
As noiseless as the sun's first beams, it vanished with the day;
But the waving fields told where it fell, when the dew had passed away.

Lord, make me like the gentle dew, that other hearts
may prove,
E'en through Thy feeblest messenger, Thy ministry
of love!

Anna Shipton.

BUTTERCUPS AND DAISIES.

I NEVER see a young hand hold
The starry bunch of white and gold,
But something warm and fresh will start
About the region of my heart.
My smile expires into a sigh,
I feel a struggling in the eye,
'Twixt humid drop and sparkling ray,
Till rolling tears have won their way;
For soul and brain will travel back
Through Memory's chequered mazes,
To days when I but trod Life's track
For "Buttercups and Daisies."

Tell me, ye men, of wisdom rare,
Of sober speech and silver hair;
Who carry counsel wise and sage,
With all the gravity of age;
Oh! say, do you not like to hear
The accents ringing in your ear,
When sportive urchins laugh and shout;
Tossing these precious flowers about;

Springing with bold and gleesome bound,
  Proclaiming joy that crazes:
And chorusing the magic sound
  Of "Buttercups and Daisies"?

Are there, I ask, beneath the sky
Blossoms that knit so strong a tie
With Childhood's love? can any please
Or light the infant eye like these?
No, no; there 's not a bud on earth,
Of richest tint, or warmest birth,
Can ever fling such zeal and zest
Into the tiny hand and breast.
Who does not recollect the hours
  When burning words and praises
Were lavished on those shining flowers,
  "Buttercups and Daisies"?

There seems a bright and fairy spell
About their very names to dwell;
And though old Time has marked my brow
With care and thought, I love them now.
Smile, if you will, but some heart-strings
Are closest linked to simplest things;
And these wild flowers will hold mine fast,
Till love, and life, and all be past;
And then the only wish I have
  Is, that the one who raises
The turf-sod o'er me, plant my grave
  With "Buttercups and Daisies."

Eliza Cook.

THE ORPHAN BALLAD-SINGERS.

OH, weary, weary are our feet,
And weary, weary is our way;
Through many a long and crowded street
We 've wandered mournfully to-day.
My little sister she is pale;
She is too tender and too young
To bear the autumn's sullen gale,
And all day long the child has sung.

She was our mother's favorite child,
Who loved her for her eyes of blue;
And she is delicate and mild —
She cannot do what I can do.
She never met her father's eyes,
Although they were so like her own;
In some far distant sea he lies,
A father to his child unknown.

The first time that she lisp'd his name,
A little playful thing was she;
How proud we were — yet that night came
The tale how he had sunk at sea.
My mother never raised her head —
How strange, how white, how cold she grew!
It was a broken heart, they said —
I wish our hearts were broken too.

We have no home — we have no friends;
  They said our home no more was ours —
Our cottage where the ash-tree bends,
  The garden we had fill'd with flowers;
The sounding shells our father brought,
  That we might hear the sea at home;
Our bees, that in the summer wrought
  The winter's golden honeycomb.

We wandered forth 'mid wind and rain;
  No shelter from the open sky;
I only wish to see again
  My mother's grave, and rest, and die.
Alas, it is a weary thing
  To sing our ballads o'er and o'er —
The song we used at home to sing —
  Alas, we have a home no more.

Miss Landon.

PRECIOUS TRUTHS.

THEY serve God well,
  Who serve His creatures.

GOOD is not a shapely mass of stone,
Hewn by man's hands and worked by him alone;
It is a seed God suffers one to sow,
Many to reap; and when the harvest grows,
God giveth increase through all the coming years, —
And lets us reap in joy, seed that was sown in tears.

All that our wisdom knows, or ever can,
Is this; that God hath pity upon man;
And where His Spirit shines in Holy Writ,
The great word *Comforter* comes after it.

Hon. Mrs. Norton.

A BIRTHDAY WALK.

TO the meadows, to the meadows, love, the birds are on the trees,
And the scent of springing violets comes stealthy on the breeze,
And the pulse of early love is warm, on the cheek and in the eye,
And the heart is beating tunefully, — it cannot tell thee why.

And we are young, my well-beloved, and life is yet to be,
And many a spring has birthdays yet, to decorate for thee,
Then let us to the meadows, love, the woodlands and the vale,
And when we 've found the "white thorn bush" I 'll listen to thy tale.

I wakened from the pleasant dream — a dream of vanished years!
And time upon my cheek had traced a pathway for the tears,

And silver were the locks, my love, that o'er thy forehead strayed,
And thou a staff hadst chosen thee, from out the hazel shade.

Yet let us to the meadows, love, e'en altered though we go,
For still, to all things beautiful, the mellowed heart can glow,
And few and brief the summer-tides that yet to us remain,
And when we've taken leave of them, we see them not again.

E'en now, in some green churchyard way, the dews of night may lave
A daisy root, like that we love from thy young mother's grave,
Which ere some pleasant spring or two hath made its leafy stir,
Shall blossom over us my love, as that did over her.

Then let us to the meadows, to the woodlands, to the vale,
Ere the golden bowl be broken, and the silver cord shall fail;
Green earth shall still be beautiful, when closed our little day,
And we'll enjoy her loveliness, as twilight sinks away.

Ann Taylor.

NOR peace nor ease the heart can know,
Which like the needle true,
Turns at the touch of Joy or Woe,
But, turning trembles too.

Mrs. Greville.

THE MESSENGER BIRD.

THOU art come from the spirits' land, thou bird!
Thou art come from the spirits' land!
Through the dark pine grove let thy voice be heard,
And tell of the shadowy band!

We know that the bowers are green and fair
In the light of that summer shore,
And we know that the friends we have lost are there;
They are there, — and they weep no more!

And we know they have quenched their fever's thirst,
From the Fountain of Youth ere now;
For there must the stream in its freshness burst,
Which none may find below.

And we know that they will not be lured to earth
From the land of deathless flowers,
By the feast, or the dance, or the song of mirth,
Though their hearts were once with ours;

But tell us, thou bird of the solemn strain!
Can those who have loved forget?
We call, and they answer not again —
Do they love — do they love us yet?

We call them far through the silent night,
And they speak not from cave or hill;
We know, thou bird! that their land is bright,
But say, do they love there still?

Mrs. Hemans.

TO A CHILD.

THE wilding rose, sweet as thyself,
And new-cropp'd daisies, are thy treasure;
I 'd gladly part with worldly pelf,
To taste again thy youthful pleasure!

But yet, for all thy merry look,
Thy frisks and wiles, the time is coming,
When thou shalt sit in cheerless nook,
The weary spell or hornbook thumbing.

Well! let it be, through weal and woe,
Thou know'st not now thy future range;
Life is a motley shifting show,
And thou a thing of hope and change.

Joanna Baillie.

A COUNTRY LIFE.

HOW sacred and how innocent
A country-life appears,
How free from tumult, discontent,
From flattery or fears!

This was the first and happiest life,
  When man enjoy'd himself,
Till pride exchanged peace for strife,
  And happiness for pelf.

'T was here the poets were inspir'd
  Here taught the multitude;
And brave they here with honor fir'd
  And civilized the rude.

The golden age did entertain
  No passion but of love;
The thoughts of ruling and of gain
  Did ne'er their fancies move.

Them that do covet only rest,
  A cottage will suffice;
It is not brave to be possess'd
  Of earth, but to despise.

Opinion is the rate of things,
  From hence our peace doth flow;
I have a better fate than kings,
  Because I think it so.

When all the stormy world doth roar,
  How unconcerned am I!
I cannot fear to tumble lower,
  Who never could be high.

Secure in these unenvied walls,
  I think not on the state,
And pity no man's case that falls,
  From his ambition's height.

Silence and innocence are safe,
  A heart that 's nobly true,
At all those little acts can laugh,
  That do the world subdue.

Katherine Philips.

GOD'S SUNBEAM.

EYES, that with holy tears are dim,
  Shine, when God's sunbeam on them plays;
In stricken souls angelic lays
Are rising like a happy hymn.

And friends belovèd, unto whom
Sorrow hath come with keenest sting
The drooping of the angel's wing
Shall bring the shade and not the gloom.

Mrs. Silsbee.

WHY thus longing, thus forever sighing
For the far-off, unattained, and dim,
While the beautiful all round thee lying,
Offers up its low perpetual hymn?

H. W. Sewall.

A LIFE OF LIBERTY.

BRIERS beset my every path,
Which call for patient care;
There is a cross in every lot,
An earnest need for prayer;
But a lowly heart that leans on Thee,
Is happy everywhere.

In service which Thy love appoints
There are no bonds for me;
My secret heart is taught "the truth,"
That makes Thy children "free;"
A life of self-renouncing love
Is a life of liberty.

Anna L. Waring.

LIFE.

A SACRED burden is the life ye bear;
Look on it, lift it, bear it solemnly;
Stand up and walk beneath it steadfastly:
Fail not for sorrow, falter not for sin,
But onward, upward, till the goal ye win.

BETTER trust all and be deceived,
And weep that trust and that deceiving,
Than doubt one heart, that, if believed,
Had blessed one's life with true believing.

Oh, in this mocking world too fast
  The doubting fiend o'ertakes our youth!
Better be cheated to the last
  Than lose the blessed hope of truth.

Frances Anne Kemble.

HE DOETH ALL THINGS WELL.

I HOPED that with the brave and strong
  My portioned task might lie;
To toil amid the busy throng
  With purpose pure and high;
But God has fixed another part,
  And He has fixed it well;
I said so with my breaking heart
  When first this anguish fell.

These weary hours will not be lost,
  These days of misery,
These nights of darkness, tempest-tossed,
  Can I but turn to Thee;
With secret labor to sustain
  In patience every blow,
To gather fortitude from pain,
  And holiness from woe.

If Thou shouldst bring me back to life,
  More humble I should be,
More wise, more strengthened for the strife,
  More apt to lean on Thee.

Should death be standing at the gate,
  Thus should I keep my vow;
But Lord! whatever be my fate,
  Oh, let me serve Thee now!

Anne Brontë.

THE FAIREST ACTION.

THE fairest action of our human life
  Is scorning to revenge an injury;
For who forgives without a farther strife,
  His adversary's heart to him doth tie,
And 't is a firmer conquest truly said,
To win the heart than overthrow the head.

Lady Elizabeth Carew.

THE FRIEND UNSEEN.

O HOLY Saviour, Friend unseen!
  The faint, the weak, on Thee may lean;
Help me, throughout life's varying scene,
  By faith to cling to Thee.

Blest with communion so divine,
Take what Thou wilt, shall I repine,
When, as the branches to the vine,
  My soul may cling to Thee?

Without a murmur I dismiss
My former dreams of earthly bliss:
My joy, my recompense, be this, —
Each hour to cling to Thee.

What though the world deceitful prove,
And earthly friends and joys remove;
With patient, uncomplaining love,
Still would I cling to Thee.

Oft when I seem to tread alone
Some barren waste, with thorns o'ergrown,
A voice of love, in gentlest tone,
Whispers, "Still cling to Me."

Though faith and hope awhile be tried,
I ask not, need not, aught beside:
How safe, how calm, how satisfied,
The souls that cling to Thee!

They fear not life's rough storms to brave,
Since Thou art near, and strong to save;
Nor shudder e'en at death's dark wave;
Because they cling to Thee!

Blest is my lot, whate'er befall;
What can disturb me, who appall,
While, as my Strength, my Rock, my All,
Saviour! I cling to Thee?

Charlotte Elliott.

COMPENSATIONS.

O THE compensating springs! O the balancings of life,
Hidden away in the workings under the seeming strife!
Slowing the fret and the friction, weighting the whirl and the force,
Evolving the truest power from each unconscious source.

How shall we gauge the whole, who can only guess a part?
How can we read the life, when we cannot spell the heart?
How shall we measure another, we who can never know
From the juttings above the surface the depth of the vein below?

Even our present way is known to ourselves alone,
Height and abyss and torrent, flower and thorn and stone;
But we gaze on another's path as a far-off mountain-scene,
Scanning the outlined hills, but never the vales between.

How shall we judge their present, we who have never seen
That which is past for ever, and that which might have been?
Measuring by ourselves, unwise indeed are we,
Measuring what we *know* by what we can hardly *see*.

Ah! if we knew it all, we should surely understand
That the balance of sorrow and joy is held with an even hand,
That the scale of success or loss shall never overflow,
And that compensation is twined with the lot of high and low.

The easy path in the lowland hath little of grand or new,
But a toilsome ascent leads on to a wide and glorious view;
Peopled and warm is the valley, lonely and chill the height,
But the peak that is nearer the storm-cloud is nearer the stars of light.

Launch on the foaming stream that bears you along like a dart—
There is danger of rapid and rock, there is tension of muscle and heart;
Glide on the easy current, monotonous, calm, and slow,
You are spared the quiver and strain in the safe and quiet flow.

O the sweetness that dwells in a harp of many strings,
While each, all vocal with love, in tuneful harmony rings!
But O, the wail and the discord, when one and another is rent
Tensionless, broken, or lost, from the cherished instrument.

For rapture of love is linked with the pain or fear of loss,
And the hand that takes the crown must ache with many a cross;
Yet he who hath never a conflict hath never a victor's palm,
And only the toilers know the sweetness of rest and calm.

Only between the storms can the Alpine traveller know
Transcendent glory of clearness, marvels of gleam and glow;
Had he the brightness unbroken of cloudless summer days,
This had been dimmed by the dust and the veil of a brooding haze.

Who would dare the choice, *neither* or *both* to know,
The finest quiver of joy or the agony-thrill of woe?
Never the exquisite pain, then never the exquisite bliss,
For the heart that is dull to that can never be strung to this.

Great is the peril or toil if the glory or gain be great;
Never an earthly gift without responsible weight;
Never a treasure without a following shade of care;
Never a power without the lurk of a subtle snare.

For the swift is not the safe, and the sweet is not the strong;
The smooth is not the short, and the keen is not the long;
The much is not the most, and the wide is not the deep,
And the flow is never a spring, when the ebb is only neap.

Then hush! oh, hush! for the Father knows what thou knowest not,
The need and the thorn and the shadow linked with the fairest lot;
Knows the wisest exemption from many an unseen snare;
Knows what will keep the nearest, knows what thou couldst not bear.

Hush! oh, hush! for the Father portioneth as He will,
To all His belovèd children, and shall they not be still?
Is not His will the wisest, is not His choice the best?
And in perfect acquiescence is there not perfect rest?

Hush! oh, hush! for the Father, whose ways are true and just,
Knoweth and careth and loveth, and waits for Thy perfect trust;
The cup He is slowly filling shall soon be full to the brim,
And infinite compensation for ever be found in Him.

Hush! oh, hush! for the Father hath fulness of joy in store
Treasures of power and wisdom, and pleasures for ever more,
Blessings and honor and glory, endless, infinite bliss;
Child of His love, and His choice, oh, canst thou not wait for this?

Frances R. Havergal.

ALL IS WELL.

THOUGH we pass through tribulation,
All will be well:
Ours is such a full salvation,
All, all is well.

We expect a bright to-morrow,
All will be well:
Faith can sing through days of sorrow,
All, all is well.

Mary Peters.

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